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## THE LURE OF THE FINE ARTS









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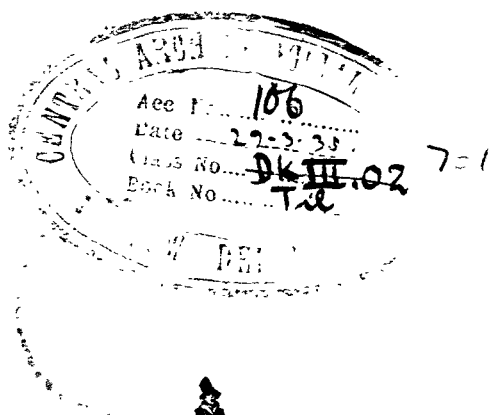
PORTRAIT OF A SCULPTOR  
DEL SARTO

# THE LURE OF THE FINE ARTS

BY  
FREDERICK COLIN TILNEY

AUTHOR OF "THE APPEAL OF THE PICTURE"  
AND KINDRED WORKS

WITH A FOREWORD BY  
SIR GEORGE CLAUSEN, R.A., R.W.S.



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## FOREWORD

**M**R. TILNEY has asked me to write a short foreword or introduction to his book ; and I do so with pleasure, as I find in it a clear and thoughtful exposition of those qualities, in works of painting, sculpture, and architecture, on which depend their claim to be considered as "works of art." Such a book is timely in its appearance, for though there is just now a greater general interest in Art, and more written on the subject than ever, it is generally written for those who are more or less informed ; but Mr. Tilney writes for the layman seeking information, "who regards pictures for the pleasure their intrinsic qualities afford him, rather than as episodes in the training of their artists," etc. In fact, in the midst of all the talk about Art, the "plain man" wants to get at a clear understanding of what it is all about ! The Rembrandts, Titians, etc., sold at high prices, excite his curiosity ; he wants to know what it is in a few yards of painted canvas that makes them so precious, and that has kept them through the ages in such high esteem.

Mr. Tilney's hope is "that those who aspire to the untroubled convictions of a personal opinion may obtain them by way of a sympathetic understanding of artistic endeavour." This is, I think, a reasonable hope, and the careful reader cannot fail to perceive that the worth and appeal of a work of art reside in the artist's power to perceive and transmit through his work some one or other of the endless manifestations of beauty in Nature that surround us on every hand.

Mr. Tilney takes as standards, and rightly, the masterpieces of the various European schools, and he gives a very clear exposition ; but I think he might extend his view, especially in regard to the influences, in some respects harking back to primitive thought, that are affecting the arts to-day. The development of Art has been from the representation of a

## FOREWORD

thing, or its symbol, to the representation of its visual appearance, and painting at the present time has reached the limits of illusion. But has it been altogether a gain?

The aim of all early Art has been, and in Oriental Art is still, to represent the spirit of the thing depicted; we see the same aim in the drawings of children. The circumstances under which it was seen have been ignored or unperceived; so that we have no illusion of perspective, no contrasts of light and shadow, but the essential elements given strongly; and in Oriental Art, with an instinctive beauty of arrangement, cultivated to an almost incredible degree of refinement. The Byzantine religious pictures, from which originated the Italian Primitives, had the same strong foundation; and gradually, as the appearances of things were discerned, the art of painting grew, until it reached in Raphael, its central point.

And so it went on till in the nineteenth century painting had become a dull formula. Romanticism, Impressionism, Post-impressionism: all were efforts to get away from it, to recover something of the strength and vigour of the early men—and of the Orientals, who are now more intelligently studied. And with all the silliness of the various developments of “Modernism” this is, I believe, to the good, and I cannot but think that here, and in the case of Whistler’s portraits, Mr. Tilney has a little blind spot; and that painting, when it has passed through its present confusions, will have gained in seriousness and strength, for we always have the great masters to refer to. But meanwhile his book will be helpful to those who require enlightenment.

GEORGE CLAUSEN.

## PREFACE

ALL but a valuable few of the books that deal with matters classified as " Art " in our catalogues treat the subject of paintings from some point of view which with better reason would justify classification as history, biography, or descriptive inventory. The more profound writers exercise ingenuity in tracing " influences " that painters have had one upon another, or have received from the events of their day. All this, however, is practically history and biography over again, though on a psychological plane. Valuable and interesting as such aspects of the subject must be, they cannot be held to affect a *prima facie* valuation such as a layman seeks who regards pictures for the pleasure their intrinsic qualities afford him rather than as evidences of episodes in the training of their artists. His desire is to acquire knowledge of the aims of Art, of the means and resources at the disposal of Art, and of the difficulties to be surmounted by skill.

That such aims, means, and resources were borrowed ; that ideas were stolen, and passages plagiarised, goes without saying ; but this book will not deal with such details nor with any anecdotes in the lives of painters, nor with categories, nor inventories. It will attempt solely to make general principles patent to the lay mind in the hope that those who aspire to the untroubled convictions of a personal opinion may attain them by way of a sympathetic understanding of artistic endeavour.

It is not to be doubted that there are thousands who do aspire to an enlightenment on these matters. The author has already been privileged to render help within a wide circle of students in all parts of the earth, and it is by advice of educational experts that the plan is now adopted of offering the substance of those lessons in book form. The method allows of an enriching amplification prompted by ideas elicited in dis-



## P R E F A C E

cussion with intelligent and cultured students, and upon that ground alone the book should prove apt for its purpose.

It is an important fact that the appreciation of works of art by the general public has dwindled consistently during the past four or five decades. The fact is proved by the contrast between what is sold in the galleries to-day and what was sold in Victorian and Edwardian days. Only in the auction rooms have the figures increased ; but that in a popular consideration is a thing to be deplored. It is not surprising that people are no longer interested. They would be foolish indeed to spend money upon what they do not wish to possess ; and the most modern Art comes largely into that category.

The "modernistic" developments in painting have now sunk to the level of the trade advertisement, yet at no time did the greater public do more than treat them with indifference or at most a cynical smile. But the cult has had the effect of first puzzling and then rendering apathetic the masses who once took a healthy interest in traditional Art. It is, therefore, in an earnest endeavour to restore sound craftsmanship and fine feeling to the place they once enjoyed in popular esteem, that these pages are offered. The hope is that, above all, people may be induced not to be shy of their own judgment, but to say boldly that they dislike what they really do dislike ; to scorn a spineless yielding and a worse affectation of approval at the behest of fashion and custom in regard to things they have not understood, and as honestly to praise what gives them pleasure, though the "highbrows" scorn it.

In no other way will a healthy art development founded upon human responses breathe again upon the dry bones of what was until recently an art loved of the people.

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COM' ESSA, DONNA, PUÒ

How can that be, lady, which all men learn  
By long experience? Shapes that seem alive,  
Wrought in hard mountain marble, will survive  
Their maker, whom the years to dust return!  
Thus to Effect, Cause yields. Art hath her turn  
And triumphs over Nature. I, who strive  
With Sculpture, know this well; her wonders live  
In spite of Time and Death, those tyrants stern.

So I can give long life to both of us  
In either way, by colour or by stone,  
Making the semblance of thy face and mine.  
Centuries hence when both are buried, thus  
Thy beauty and my sadness shall be shown,  
And men shall say, 'For her 'twas wise to pine.'

MICHELANGELO.

(Translated by John Addington Symonds.)





# THE LURE OF THE FINE ARTS

## CHAPTER I

### THE ART IMPULSE

SOMEWHERE I have heard tell of an experiment with little dolls or marionettes which are galvanised into all sorts of curious activity when an electric current is passed through them. This seems to me to provide an exact analogy to the diversified results of creative art, brought about as they are by some impulse upon the human organism. What is that impulse? It would seem to be an "urge" to communicate to others what has been experienced either directly through the senses, or felt directly by imagination grounded upon observation. An emotion that is subjective in one person becomes objective in another. Upon the power of communication rests all the usefulness in Art.

With such a general, universal, and basic principle as starting point for the art-impulse, it might be expected that art manifestation would everywhere present similar results, human nature and great outer nature being elemental. And if we seek only for elemental traits in art-manifestations we can indeed find them easily enough, but more obvious characteristics show veritably as an infinite variety of chinks and cheeses. From cave-paintings to Raphael and Michelangelo, and from these giants to the depraved picturings of our lunatic asylums, the enormous and multitudinous differences between results arise not only from the simple impulse but from the complexity of responses to it.

We cannot define the impulse towards creative art more truly than to call it an influence; something which sets going our emotions and our intellect, and to which our instincts

respond forcefully or faintly, grossly or ethereally, admirably or detestably, according to our character and temperament.

When in addition to these factors we consider also the various conditions of life of the artist—the epochs in which he has existed, the state of advancement of his race and nationality, the degree of his mental development, and the direction of his line of culture, there remains no wonder that works of art generally regarded present infinite differences in idea, conception, treatment, and realisation ; notwithstanding the certainty that the impulse must ever have been the same, and that observation of external phenomena by vision cannot have altered from age to age or at different parts of the earth. Environment governs objective matters, but changes of manner are subjective.

With this idea in possession we can understand with ease why the graphic and plastic arts stretch over so lengthy a gamut of style and manner as to include, for example, “preraphaelism” and “impressionism,” and embrace such conventions as outline, monochrome, and arbitrary colour. We can accept equally the fact of a Wiertz and a Birket Foster ; a Fra Angelico and a Norman Lindsay. And we can with assurance apply the dictum “By their fruits ye shall know them,” not only to the more obvious matter of choice of theme but with equal certainty to the method of approach, the “handling,” the application, the slowness or the haste, the devoutness or the flippancy of each artist’s practice.

The same principle applies to that person for whom chiefly these thoughts are followed out—the art-enthusiast who may or may not be an active creator of works of art, but whom we are safe in calling the interested layman or art-lover. He “studies what he affects,” and with him, as much as with the practising artist, a pronounced individuality of outlook is often no more than a limit of scope. The greater the experience, the less intolerant is the mind ; the wider the sympathies, the more apt are the emotions.

But there is something beyond mere catholicity in a breadth of appreciation : there is juster discrimination ; there is emancipation from bias and obsession. Fanaticism, such as that to which the young and the shallow so easily become a prey, is not possible with those who have a knowledgeable eye

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for opposites ; and we find that the rabid advocates of the latest art-fad are invariably those who are powerless to value the merits of the thing to which the fad is opposed. This is a rule of life of which examples abound in art history.

It has sometimes been asked whether a painter, doomed to spend his life on an island without hope of communication with his kind, would produce works of art with all the effort he was capable of exerting. The true answer is probably that he would enjoy such occupation as a pastime and solace for a limited period, but would ultimately lose all incentive for practice, contenting himself with observation and contemplation. The most reclusive artist counts upon some ghostly, unacknowledged patron or potential sympathiser for whose pleasure he pleases himself. And in any case, no true artist will, without protest, submit to pleasing a patron by not pleasing himself.

In essence the art impulse is unquestionably altruistic, although its strength is in the self-interest that keeps the mind of man alive.

Without the "well done" few would have the heart to persevere. The thrill of joy it brings is not self-esteem. More often it is the grateful relief with which one learns that one's work is less poor than it was feared to be, and has won a sympathiser.

It is evident that if the artist does his work with telling power, those who see it must be stirred likewise in some way or another. For this reason, the term emotion applies equally to the feeling of those who receive the creative or interpretative work of the artist. It is thus that emotion is communicable.

The very earliest traces of man show him to have had the beauty sense and a feeling for Art in his needs. There is, therefore, no reason to suppose that Art is, in its essence, something foreign to the humblest representative of the human species. This fact has sometimes been lost sight of in these times, owing chiefly to our readiness to believe that the beauty sense depends upon specialised training in Art. With that mistaken notion the average person timorously confesses to tastes and preferences in a covert, shamefaced way, sometimes almost apologetic, and is usually ready to sacrifice them to the

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opinion of the first "expert" who, with assurance and assumption, passes adverse judgment upon the taste exhibited.

In the dim ages of budding human consciousness there must have been some incentive to make things beautiful, and it was probably the smiling approval of fellow or mate; in other words, the response from someone who found that by seeing the artist's work he felt as the artist felt.

In life we are impelled to tell, to persuade, to lead, to urge, to threaten, to comfort, to delight, as much in deference to our own necessity as to that of the object of our ministrations. The misery following unappreciated effort is proof of the principle.

In Art we show, we expound, we reconstruct, we embellish, in order that what we have in our minds and hearts shall extend to the minds and hearts of others.

If art activity be undertaken without the desire to communicate a message, as it may be by pressure of circumstances, or merely because the wishes of others overcome the subject's indifference; then the impulse is from without and the result is almost certain to be failure.

Why this is so can easily be understood. When action is taken in a half-hearted way the work is perfunctory; in other words, it proceeds only by the rules and formulæ acquired. It may be technically excellent; but that is not enough. The emotion is lacking, for the impulse is not from within. There is nothing to be expressed, so the performance is an empty show. To impress nobody is to suffer the true verdict that the heart is not in the work.

When the heart is in the work, however, the performance may be below or above an average standard of technical merit; the fact either way counts for much less than the urgency, the conviction, and feeling with which the emotion is expressed.

There is a message to be delivered in one case; in the other there is none, only a beautiful language in which to deliver one.

As to that, it might very naturally be thought that if Art is perfected by the mere force of the emotion or message, there can be little need for the beautiful language in which to express it.

It will be admitted, however, that there must always be a

## THE ART IMPULSE

means of expression of some kind or other, and so long as this means is not mistaken for the end (and that is what "art for art's sake" implies) there is nothing but advantage in its being as efficient and beautiful as possible. The contention is that, of itself, the means, however perfect, is but a part of the artistic whole at the best of times ; whereas the emotion, when it is strong and intense, can exalt the lowest means to fit its purpose.

It is a fact that the speech of illiterate persons becomes dignified and moving diction under the stress of terrific emotion. In such cases, it is true that Nature is working alone. The issues are elemental and admit no conscious art. Indeed, it is from such supreme moments in life, when Nature asserts herself above all conventions, that Art learns its greatest lessons. Exalted poetic diction, commanding or despairing gesture, shouts of joy or cries of horror ; all this is the language Art borrows from Nature for her highest flights in Poetry, Painting, and Music.

Can there be any doubt that Art is at its finest when it appeals most irresistibly to human sensitiveness ? And whence arises that sensitiveness but from life's experiences and convictions ; in other words, from lessons learnt from Nature ?

The true artist evokes his echo from that sensitiveness. He sets up a correspondence between himself and those to whom he appeals, making himself one with them by a bond of sympathy. They understand his message. He and they feel the same emotion at the same time.

Further, those to whom the appeal is made contribute very largely to their own enjoyment and to the intensity of feeling by which the artistic result is secured. Good Art is always thus objective as well as subjective, and there is no more perfect consummation than this which involves a co-partnership of impulse in a work of art. It is the only safe criterion.

But we are not at liberty to say that any work submitted to our judgment is either good or bad accordingly as we understand it or find it meaningless.

Our response is, as we have seen, necessary to our enjoyment ; but it may happen that the tardiness of our response is an argument for, rather than against, the excellence of a work of

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art. If the work be full of meaning, subtle, and complex, we may find it too much for our understanding, when naturally there will be but feeble response. The fault in that case is probably with ourselves.

In the domain of Music the best critics admit the impossibility of grasping all the beauties of an important work at the first hearing. In Painting, similarly, a good picture does not reveal all its truth and charm until it has been often seen or even lived with.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PHRASE, "THE FINE ARTS"

THE simple word "Art" has been used in such a multitude of ways that all sorts of people find an application for it in matters ranging from aeroplane "stunts" to hair-cutting. Such a universal employment of the word is perfectly defensible, for Art, in the meaning of the Latin word from which it was derived, *ars*, simply means the *doing* of a thing ; not the *knowing* of a thing : that is the meaning claimed by the term Science (Latin, *scio*, I know). It is, therefore, quite legitimate to speak of an art of hair-cutting, of tailoring, and so forth ; since any handicraft that demands skill or cunning for its best performance is, so far, an art.

When the word is thus seen to be within its rights in representing almost any activity, material or mental, in which thought and judgment are concerned, it can hardly be a useful one to apply to things that are specific and mean something very definite and choice. From this need of a word that would connote less than anything and everything came the coining of the phrase, "Fine Art." But whether or not this was first applied to Literature and Music as well as to Painting, Sculpture, and their allied arts, I do not know, nor can I discover. What is quite certain, however, is that some modern dictionaries include Music and Literature in the scope of their definition of Fine Art. But we know how dictionaries are put together ; they do not seek to guide or govern language ; they do but attempt to keep pace with its fluctuations, and what they would anathematise in one edition they canonise in a later. It happened occasionally that eminent critics like Walter Pater used the term "fine art of Literature," and spoke of Music as a fine art. Naturally the dictionaries had to follow suit.

Since the word "art" meant a trade or a handicraft, it was



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the most natural thing in the world to qualify it when it was wanted to mean something more than a mere handicraft. If to make a cup for ordinary use was an art, it was finer art to make a chalice of exquisite design and embellished with ornament and jewels, an object of beauty as well as of use. It was indeed art of a specifically "fine" description, devoted to the production of beautiful workmanship not at all useful but purely luxurious.

This is indeed what Fine Art stands for. It is a luxury ; it has no obligations to actual utility. The Fine Arts then were the luxurious portion of the ordinary arts, but still concerned with things made with the hands. The monastic scribe who wrote his classics on parchment, felt at times that his work was worthy of a beautiful rendering, and he therefore chose his material with a jealous care and expended pains upon his writing far beyond what was needed merely to convey the meaning of the text he was transcribing. The cleverest of such scribes allowed themselves the liberty of inserting handsome initial letters and other ornaments, bringing in rich, bright colour and gold to their aid—all quite unnecessary, but very delightful and perchance elevating. In short, the mere artist thus developed into the fine-artist. It is easy to see how this embellishment was elaborated into highly-wrought pictures specially entrusted to painters who could work in miniature.

Picture-painting might, without much stretch of imagination, be traced from the painted coffin-lids of the Egyptians, Not that the early Egyptians were the first to practise painting. It was an art of prehistoric man, and paintings are extant that were executed by the people of Crete before the building of the Pyramids. But since the date of the painted coffin-lids of Egypt there has been no break in development : no starting afresh from initial discovery.

Fine Art should mean not brainwork alone, but handwork necessarily, although the more brain guidance of the hand there be, the more fine the art.

"Music" is a term well defined. Nobody has a doubt of what it means. "Literature" is in a like happy position ; but Painting and Sculpture have no generic term but "Art," except the qualifications "graphic" and "plastic" arts

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(Greek, *grapho*, I write ; *plasso*, I form, I daub over). My contention is therefore that the term “ Fine Arts ” should be used exclusively for Painting, Sculpture, Modelling, Engraving, Carving, and any other allied activity that exerts individual taste and special skill.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE BEAUTY SENSE

IF the reader will pardon a short excursion into metaphysics—of a very elementary kind—it can be explained why allusion has been made to the Beauty Sense of primeval man—a daring assumption.

It will be admitted that as an animal with five senses and a brain primitive man made observations respecting natural phenomena. Next, that having memory he stored more or less these observations in some recesses of his consciousness whence he could bring them to light again when occasion required. Without memory every observation would be an entirely new experience for him, and he would be unable to relate one experience with another. But with the aid of memory he would be able to give an extra value to every new experience by remembering certain similar observations already stored. Comparison would thus generate knowledge beyond that of initial observation, and such extra knowledge would be a "Concept" of the phenomenon observed. Further, such a concept would be to him a standard of identity by which fresh experiences would be classified as either repetition solely or repetition with a difference. Any such difference would act as amplification, correction, or adjustment of the concept. Mental Perception would now be established as a process in addition to physical observation.

Perception cannot be possible without Observation at some time or other; although Observation at other times may take place and lead to nothing. It is likely that a cow, gazing in its placid way as it reposes in a field and chews the cud, may be observing as much (and the same) as a man of high intelligence who happens also to be in the field. But it is practically certain that the cow would have little or no perception of the portent of the objects in the scene, or their relation to each other; and still less would she be likely to arrive at such con-

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cepts as the man would. In the words of Kant, Perceptions without Concepts are blind.

We know that in the things we see there are certain basic principles of physics in evidence; and perhaps a proper observance of them causes satisfaction to the mind. Certainly these principles seem to involve in their essence a necessity that forms should be what they claim to be. For example, a line that claims to be a straight line must appear straight to be beautiful; a curved line must be a masterly curve; a circle or an ellipse, if they are to be such, must be easily and strongly so to our eyes, or else we shall consider them feeble or bad. In all things that are *intended to be* upright a variation or a weak lapse from the principle of uprightness is inimical to beauty. In Nature that principle is prescribed of trees like the cypress and the poplar; in Architecture we could not admire pillars, monuments, steeples, or even walls that deviated from the upright line. The Tower of Pisa is not the more beautiful because it leans; it is in this respect simply an engaging curiosity. Further, there should be a rational relation of large to small, strong to weak, heavy to light, to satisfy an innate craving for stability, security, and the needs of growth; and probably Beauty owes much to a correspondence with the grand plan of Nature.

Primitive man doubtless exercised his mind in this way chiefly for his own bodily advantage; but in doing so he would have scheduled, so to speak, the things that were good for him, and those that were not. In other words, he would have developed Judgment and Preferences. As he became mentally advanced his preferences would have extended to a less elemental plane than that of simple concern for life and death and procreation. He would have developed likes and dislikes about everything.

We can imagine that the earliest lake-dwellers would set out their stakes in an orderly fashion before they built upon them their superstructures of branches and clay. We can imagine further that the natives who built huts of mud or of branches would instinctively make them in the easiest and most economical form, and this would certainly be the self-supporting dome-shape. There would be no difficulty in thinking of many

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other examples where the principle of strength with ease would be an incentive to early man and inevitably set up in his mind a standard of efficiency which would quickly become, through preference, a canon of beauty to him.

But it is not only in his own handiwork that man would derive his ideas of the fitting and the good which we should translate as the beautiful. He would observe the operation of certain laws of Nature, and find food for thought in the appearances of natural phenomena. The sun would teach him the circle. The flinging of a stone would reveal to him the splendour of the curve of its trajectory, and the inevitability and strength of it would impress him. Soon he would come to feel that a long, smooth line, in whatever way it might be curved, was somehow a pleasurable thing, and he would find confirmation of this in the forms of plant and animal life.

Ideas of suitability in matters of proportion would likewise be gathered.

A stone flung into a pond would teach the primeval man the beauty of wave movement and next of wave form, and the charm of its attenuation by diminishing force. In a later stage, at the discovery of the potter's wheel, he would find an even more immediate cause for the fascination of symmetry through movement. A short experience would teach him that the shapes of the pots which he spun upon his wheel were the most serviceable when they conformed in their outlines to the curves which he had learned to regard as desirable curves to the eye.

It is believed that Motion is one of the springs of æsthetic enjoyment, and having regard to the fact that man's emergence from a static world, although by way of æons of development, would carry some vestige of exhilaration, it may be that the fascination of certain lines and contours are attributable to a joy in motion. In Benedetto Croce's "*Æsthetic*," p. 346, occurs the following passage: "The aged Theodore Fischer described *Æsthetic* in his auto-criticism as the union of mimetic and harmony, and the Beautiful as the harmony of the universe, which is never realised in fact because it is infinite. When we think to grasp the beautiful, we experience that exquisite illusion, which is the æsthetic fact. Robert Fischer, son of the foregoing, introduced the word 'Einfühlung' to

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express the vitality which he believed that men inspired into things with the help of the æsthetic process." (Translation by W. H. Carr.)

This is all very cryptic. In the first place it of course postulates the absoluteness of Beauty by defining it as harmony *of the Universe*, whilst æsthetic is a union of mimicry with some other harmony *in the man*. The reader must know that to me Æsthetic and Beautiful are not two things, but one. Next, I cannot think that mimesis, the imitative faculty, can be a prime cause. Why should we, elementally, want to imitate anything? There must be some urging factor established first. If, however, joy in locomotion is granted, it is reasonable to assume a harmony between that joy and movement in things. So that "when we think to grasp the beautiful we experience that exquisite illusion, which is the æsthetic fact" of becoming *involved in*—spiritually combined with—the beauty-possessing fact. The meaning of Fischer's phrase is locked up in that word "illusion"; illusion of what? I can only think it is the illusion of having become the beauty-fact itself. What it is, that we are also.

As in all such elusive introspections the elemental is very actively at work, the proposition offers nothing antagonistic to the notion I have submitted of a survival of primordial conditions and living man's association with them. And it would seem that Robert Fischer arrived at a similar interpretation when he coined the word "Einfühlung" to meet the case. "Feeling in" is rather a crass translation of the term, and perhaps "living in the fact" would be closer to the meaning. The word has, however, won recognition in a Greek form, "Empathy," for which another German savant is responsible; and that, by a gain of remoteness allows of a less narrow interpretation in English. But to me the idea of either word will not detach itself from motion because it implies a condition of activity not only in the subject but in the object. We can readily participate in the feeling of motion, but any feeling of passive being is difficult to come at. I can, I think, supply an instance that would illustrate my own conception of the matter. As a small boy I used to delight in whirling about a piece of string, the two ends of which had been ignited, and the flame

blown out. In the dark the glowing ends described in their rapid paths the changing forms of circles, ellipses, figures of eight and the queerest kind of loop shapes. The pleasure in these lines and shapes was derived from and intimately related to my own conscious following of the figures. *I felt myself into the motion.*

But Empathy is not a provision for such simple and direct application. It does not claim to deal exclusively with actual motion, but with sensations of progress or direction in the shapes of things (or rather, in the aspect of the shapes of things). For example, we should, by this theory enjoy the shape of a vase by an apprehension of the *direction* of its contours: we should feel ourselves into the progress of a branch or spray that sprung from the stem, rose upward and drooped over; going with it, not merely by eye-movement, but by mental coincidence. Of course, the beauty of movement-shapes, such as my infantile fireworks, can readily be accepted on such terms, as when we watch exploding rockets and their cascades of fire. So, when primeval man watched cascades of water was he not also teaching himself the beauty of the *curve of the movement*? Our joy in the flight of gulls and swifts is of this kind, communicating itself to the actual line of the motion.

Convincing as this may be for a theory that includes nothing but Shape as Beauty, it fails to my mind in providing no explanation of the beauties of Colour and of Light and Shade, with both of which the idea of progression or direction has nothing to do. We are left to feel ourselves into colour manifestations as best we may. Empathy is, therefore, only part of the story.

Accepting Empathy as a theory for Shape alone, however, we may presume that primitive man, feeling the pleasure of these principles in natural phenomena, would readily come to the desire of controlling them himself. Shaping his tools and materials for useful purposes, he would combine with his work ideas derived from his appreciation of lines and shapes; in other words, he would arrive at notions of abstract beauty. His next step, therefore, would be some attempt at use of those principles for Beauty's sake alone, without special regard to the useful purpose served—and this is Art.

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The primeval man who painted animal representations in the Altamira caves ; who ornamented his implements, and polished his flints, was actuated by æsthetic impulse. He drew his mammoths and bisons in outline, let it be observed, though he never saw an outline in Nature. Outlines are the conventional renderings of the boundaries where one space finishes and another begins. The fact that he drew in outline proves that the principle of the line as bounding a shape was instinctively understood. The invention of the potter's wheel would put his power over the beauty of shape beyond doubt.

What the primeval man did, the artist of to-day does. There is no break in the continuity, and we may at once come to the works of art of the present day, and there find, further developed, refined, and spiritualised, the results of the principles of beauty which have their root in man's appreciation of natural law as the criterion of good. In all cases the thoughts and activities resolve themselves into expressions of attraction and repulsion.

These alternatives, whether moral or physical, result from the mind's reaction to stimuli. Just as our mouths react chemically to salt, mustard, sugar, and our noses to attar of roses and asafetida, so there is some sort of moral chemistry which operates when shapes, colours, and tones are presented to our concepts by way of our eyes. In the first case, where the senses of taste and smell are in operation, the result is automatic and involuntary. In the other case it is the beauty sense which deals with stimulus, finding something either liked or disliked, according to psychic conditions.

If we admit that liking or disliking are the alternative results of our reactions to stimuli received through vision, then we have come a long way towards discovering what Beauty is : a quest which has exercised the minds of philosophers ever since there were philosophers. Only in recent years has it been occasionally admitted that Beauty is not a quality existing in some things *whether anybody sees them or not*. The arguments here adduced will attempt to show that Beauty, in fact, is subjective and relative—not objective and absolute. The word Beauty is a term defining the kind of sensation we experience in responding to certain stimuli ; but our response is variable,



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according to circumstances, and, therefore, what is beautiful to us on one day may not be so on another, nor to another person.

Much effort has been expended since Baumgarten (1714-62) formalised the science of *Æsthetics* ; but elaborate attempts to trace the effects of shapes, tones, and colours on the minds of people by such clumsy, if direct, means as a "questionnaire" have proved only chaotic. Average people cannot usefully analyse their feeling, as the answers have shown. If I might hazard a rather subversive opinion, it is that the science of *Æsthetics* sets out to pursue a will-o'-the-wisp if it first assumes the existence of some absolute quality called Beauty (answering to a Platonic "Form") and then attempts to hunt it down. If there were such a thing as absolute Beauty we may feel sure that the old Greek philosophers would have discovered it, which they did not, nor has anyone since. What investigators do really hunt down is not the elusive Beauty at all, but the myriad variations in the temperamental make-up of the witnesses who join in the chase, the reactions of whom are *ipso facto* no longer spontaneous and involuntary, but vitiated by the inevitable self-consciousness produced by the process ; harbouring imagination, auto-suggestion, obtuseness from nervous embarrassment, and many such derangements of feeling, to say nothing of inaccuracy of verbal expression in giving evidence.

Whatever may come of such efforts to transfix the agencies that work these hidden mysteries within us, there can be no doubt about the ultimate general acceptance of the belief that Beauty is not a discernible quality ; not even a condition of actual things ; but a mere happening—a combination of elements to form a result, just as water will result from a combination of hydrogen and oxygen. One element proceeds from the object esteemed beautiful, and the other is within ourselves. But, of course the mere meeting of the elements may not be enough ; there must be fusion, otherwise there is no sense of beauty as a result. We might metaphorically put it this way : Every individual by his mode of life and manner of thought moulds his consciousness into a particular conformation. It develops "wards" like a lock, into the plan or pattern of which certain influences or elements will fit by





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reason of their complementary conformation, as does a key in the lock. This fitting is the thrill which rare beauty occasions when it is experienced.

In considering what variability there must be throughout the ages and across the continents in this conformation of consciousness and temperament we find at once the answer to the old riddle why there should be so many standards and types of beauty, many of which are opposed.

As I write, the fashion still holds in the social world that a woman must be slim to be beautiful ; and ladies who are on the " full " side of the average are less happy about it than those who are thin as herrings. But if the ladies of both kinds could be induced to enter the National Gallery in London, and look at " The Judgment of Paris," by Rubens, they would see that the painter's canon of feminine beauty was a deal fuller still, and that the herring lady was much the farther off from an estimate of beauty than was the other. It is beside the point to say, " O ! Rubens ! Well we can't count him and his Flemish predilections." For Rubens was a genius in art ; a man of great refinement and culture, a classical scholar, a Court favourite and go-between among sovereigns, and by his tactful statesmanship brought about more than one *coup d'état* that altered the course of history. Ignorant people assume that Rubens was a gross man. He was a superb example of the best of his time. If we had been born where and when he was we should have endorsed his estimates of beauty, as did Charles I., the first gentleman of Europe. It is only because some of us (not all, by any means) have not had our concepts moulded into the conformations to which his had grown, that we are given to calling his Venus, Juno and Minerva " revoltingly fat creatures " and other unkind and unjust names. Rubens, on the other hand, and Paris likewise, would have scorned our elegant herrings. So in this cross-over arrangement of elements there would have been no sense of beauty on either side.

All avenues of thought lead us to conclude that Beauty is apprehended primarily through the sense of sight. This may seem a very limited idea when we remember the beauty there is in poetry and music. But what we feel of Beauty in these and other things not seen by the eye comes about by analogy and

association with ideas of the outward appearance of things. This borrowing and mingling of ideas has extended the sense of Beauty to abstract things and carried it into all realms of thought. If, however, we would understand the nature of Beauty we must dissociate it at once from mere passive physical sensation, and also from the concurrence of our moral sense in the virtues, acts of heroism and compassion, and other worthy motives and deeds. The term "Beauty" is not used with strict propriety in such cases; and unless we are strict in these matters we can come to no understanding.

The frequent use of the word "beautiful" for the pleasure experienced in such things as hot baths and chocolates, has led the term to be improperly widened in connotation and application. This we must guard against; for we cannot get the glimmering of an idea of what Beauty is except by approaching it as an *intellectual* and not as a *sensory* pleasure. Because certain foods are pleasant to the taste, and perfumes give delight; because velvet is fascinating to the touch, do not let us think that these senses have any strict right to claim Beauty as their prerogative.

True as it may be that the pleasure we take in the satisfaction of our sensory responses is due to an instinctive wish for what is necessary to our physical advantage, yet sensory pleasure is but the first stage in the formation of concepts; and by virtue of concepts only can we arrive at the instantaneous adjudication that is Beauty's thrill, and which, in terms of words may be stated as "this excels."

Such an idea of *comparative* excellence does not appear to come into the theories of modern æsthetics; but it seems to me essential to a quest wherein a standard and preferences are important considerations. In referring our preferences to first causes we must admit that where they were most instrumental for creature welfare they would have been most highly esteemed and most apt to survive. Indeed, one cannot be sure that Beauty is not more a matter of degree than kind.

As to the troublesome question how far sensuous passive pleasure can be regarded as a perception of Beauty in those borderlands of humanity where intellect is at a low ebb, the theory I advance offers, I think, a clear solution. Subcon-

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scious recognition of fitness as pleasure, will rise to consciousness of it in a higher grade of mentality, and in the highest, will admit comparative methods and all the subtleties of critical appraisement.

The sense of sight which together with those of touch and hearing control our apprehension of space, holds, it has here been claimed, the origins of beauty. "Space" is all but a synonym for "shape," and the knowledge of shape demands something like calculation of measurements in the mind. Shape appreciation is, therefore, a process of the intellect ; not of the senses.

By thus lifting the beauty sense from the sensory plane to the intellectual, we drop out the simpler sensations of taste and smell as lacking participation in the space idea. They are not amenable to the intellectual control as hearing is. Music is by analogy a spatial as well as a temporal art. It has form. We cannot consider the formal peculiarities of musical composition—design, recurrence, contrast, "imitation," cadence, and all the structural aspects of counterpoint—without visualising them. Since, in listening, we apprehend the form of music by memory of what has gone and anticipation of what will come ; and as by some curious analogy already in our minds we picture the upper notes of the scale as higher in space than the lower ones ; and in an elaborate piece of music, such as an orchestral symphony, we apprehend, while listening, a suppositional form bounded by high notes proceeding at the top and low notes at the bottom, and between them a variety of other flowing parts, crossing and intermingling, sometimes with a distinct idea of building, the complete work is presented to our minds as a three-dimensional structure.\* But we cannot make symphonies of smells.

\* With regard to the assertion that the beauty of musical composition is due to Form, and is therefore a spatial concept and not merely a sensuous delight, a friend writes : "I wanted to argue that beauty of sound was something quite distinct from beauty 'through the eye.' So it is, *now*, but I'll agree with you that beauty through the eye came first." My reply is that the sensuous beauty of sounds is, of course, the *chief* delight in music, and Form's only duty is to make the best of them. But without Form they would not be music ; they would only be pleasing noises. Those exist in the nightingale's notes, but his "song" is enjoyed through its Form. It is because Form is not clearly and simply constructed that modernistic music of some kinds is chaotic, and the beauty of sounds is killed by jumble and disorder.

Among modern philosophers, Vernon Lee ascribes ideas of beauty to the qualities of shape alone ; \* not exactly the shape of things as we use and handle them, but the shape which the aspects of a thing present to us ; for it is, of course, the aspect of a thing which is beautiful, not the thing itself. Vernon Lee explains that when we speak of the beauty of a mountain, we are not referring to the material of which it is composed or with which it is covered—rock, gorse, ice, or snow ; not even to the ups and downs, at close quarters, but to the appearance or aspect which the mountain presents under any of its varying conditions of light and atmosphere. The mountain is usually admired from a distance, and its attractiveness is due to its colour, its tone (lightness or darkness, according to the illumination), and to its shape cutting against the sky. In the same manner a figure is beautiful in its aspects ; that is, in the way the light reveals its form ; in the disposition of its lines and masses (the pose), and in its relation to its environment. To this we have added, heterodoxically, that colour must also be admitted to give rise, intellectually, to Beauty, since it arrives by visual perception. For in the consideration of Beauty in Nature and in works of Art, Colour is, to-day at any rate, of equal importance with Shape in almost every department of thought and research. And if we regard light and shade patches as colour, they also must share the importance. It seems, therefore, that some adjustment of the exclusive theory of Shape as beauty origin is due from philosophers of to-day.

This is a truth so self-evident in a consideration of Beauty, that the consensus of prejudice by which it has hitherto lacked acknowledgment seems inexplicable ; particularly as in arguments supporting the absoluteness of beauty, the sunset is continually offered as illustration, in spite of the fact that its salient beauties lie in its colour and not in the shapes of its clouds.

Evolution sanctions the belief that Colour equals Shape in importance as a beauty-factor ; for it does not appear to be likely that the brilliant hues of tropical birds were developed to hide them from enemies ; though, of course, they might do

\* " The Beautiful," by Vernon Lee (Cambridge University Press).

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so in some conditions of intense illumination of variegated foliage. As a sex-lure, however, the high pitch and the beauty of the plumage hues as we see them, provide better reason for intensive survival. So with the peacock and similar birds which display not only special shape-charms but equally special colour-charms. Man, therefore, must have inherited this evolutionary legacy of colour sensitiveness in relation to preference.

In the orders of plants and animals the resources of Shape are equally matched by those of Colour in ministering to the preservation of life and to sexual choice ; and this not only by means of unalterable pigmentation in tissues, fur, feathers, egg-shell, and so on, but by what looks almost like voluntary change in order to match colour to that of environment, as evidenced by flat fish, the chameleon, and other organisms. In view of such elaborate provision which raises coloration to a high rank in the economy of Nature, there is perhaps more yet to be discovered in the organic mysteries of Colour than of Shape.

Colour is caused by light, and in nature is quite independent of Shape except as it is modified by shadow. It obeys no laws that belong exclusively to the structure of solid things. It may or may not be governed by their forms. A cloudless sky is a gradual change of hue from zenith to horizon. Though it occurs in space it has no relation to Form in principle. The marking on shells and the pigmentation of organic bodies are characteristics, far more often than not, quite at variance with the shapes of things they adorn.

It is not fair to Colour to say, as some do, that its appeal is entirely sensory like that of Sound, and to credit its beauty to spatial manifestations. For although we enjoy musical symphonies, we can also enjoy sounds for their own sakes in a *comparative* way. There are *qualities* of sounds and of colours too. Whistler claimed to make colour symphonies, and Turner made transcendent ones without claiming anything ; but in neither case was Form or Shape an essential in the claim, expressed or otherwise.

The part played by intellect in lifting Colour from the sensory plane is the appraising of qualities, of quantities, of



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modifications, of mergings, and of contrasts in a scheme that is exclusively Colour. The mind does this with exactly that calculation of proportional parts postulated to be necessary to an appreciation of Shape. But the result is not a shape concept as a musical work is : it is rather a concept of formless quantitative intensities.

We cannot conceive that Beauty exists in Shape exclusively ; and it is to be doubted whether Shape, apprehended by touch alone, as in the case of those born blind, possesses any considerable thrill of beauty. We who enjoy vision cannot gauge the depth of emotion in those who have never seen ; and they themselves are powerless to compare. And for people who once saw and have become blind there is memory to set up association of ideas. With this advantage the probability is that colour, and light and shade—which in reality is a coloration of surfaces and a beauty-asset of shape—have much to do with pleasurable responses to Shape achieved by tactile perception.\*

The philosophers of antiquity made no provision for Colour in their theories of Beauty, possibly because they did not know Colour as we know it. They saw rainbows, but their eyes appear to have seen less in them than do modern eyes. There seems to be good reason for believing that within the last two thousand years the human eye has developed more upon the lines of sensitiveness to Colour than of sensitiveness to Shape. The modern "æsthetist" has, therefore, ample ground for modifying the antique theories that he too often regards as sacrosanct—or safe "jumping off" places. To deny that Colour is a special factor in Beauty is perversion only

\* It may be asked here whether people born blind are, on the lines of this argument, less sensitive to music than those who see. Can they regard it as having spatial Form ? This question would under-rate the intensified tactile sense of the blind, which naturally would have its own heritage of fitness perception, though derived through the fingers instead of the eyes. Blind people are known to be very responsive to music ; and that sensitiveness is a benison of their hypersensitive hearing in which the sensory sound-beauties are perhaps intensified, whilst the Form is strengthened by direct three-dimensional practice through life, not interpreted as such by way of two-dimensional retinal images.

Musical critics have always recognised Form's importance. The sensuous delights of the *timbre*, the harmonies, the "sonorities" and all the other resources of vocal and instrumental qualities of sound, they themselves class as "orchestral colour" ; and that is quite in accordance with the dual visual foundation of beauty which has been advanced.

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possible to those concerned in supporting theories that do not accommodate it. As a part of vision, Colour is responsible for more intensity and ubiquity of feeling and response than is Shape. Any beauty of colour in Vernon Lee's mountain example is quite unprovided for by the Empathy theory.

In a complete tale of beauty the sensuous factors undoubtedly count for much. For example, the complete tale of beauty of the rose is undoubtedly contributed to by the pleasures of colour and scent (Apuleius would have added flavour). The peach seems to call upon the sense of touch in further addition; but it is scarcely possible, however, to think of anything in which taste and hearing would co-operate in an elemental or instinctive estimate of desirability, without descending to the chaotic disorganisations of nightmare.

If it is admitted that the beauty sense is derived from things *seen*, it will readily be understood that the principles of beauty are most obvious in the arts of sculpture and painting. This would explain the marvellous fact that these arts found amazingly clear expression with prehistoric man of the quaternary period, who carved and painted. It would also explain how the earliest civilisations became ready and efficient in these arts before the ages of written language.

Primeval man would first regard colour as a guide to help him in his rejection or acceptance of ideas concerning his welfare. Blood he would distinguish from water by its colour. In a sky overspread by clouds he would by colour alone tell whether or not it presaged a storm, and by colour would he distinguish ripe fruit from unripe.

From this point, no longer only passive to sensory impressions of colour, man begins to relate them actively to his active enjoyment. He takes them up, so to speak, and plays with them in the mere joy of exercising his will and power. Why, if not for the fun of exercising his power, should man ever have played with colour? Why should he have stained his body and his raiment? Not surely as an aid to distinguishing them. Why should he have coloured his cave paintings? The answer is that the time in which he began to play with colours was the time when he began to think. All that concerns the unthinking lower animals in regard to colour is

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instinctive and follows the rules set down for instinctive preferences for the welfare of the species and the individual. In the babyhood of mankind, as in our own babies to-day, the same kind of sublimated instinct appears as thought—of a kind. Love of control—the joy of putting things into action—is a normal and healthy condition. The baby of six months will splash in his bath and laugh heartily when the water goes over his mother or nurse.

If, then, we admit the delight of expressing the sense of power, we can see why primitive men should, when they found ochre or chalk, take pleasure in spreading it about. They did so as they might have broken branches off trees, and as boys to-day break fences, simply because they found they were able to do so. Once having smeared pigment on the canoe, the stake or pile, or the shaft of a spear, the trick would possibly be copied one from the other, and the effect would be varied with red earths, ochre, chalk, and all the other resources in natural pigment that presented themselves. From this to painting their bodies is a mere step, but it brings us right into the æsthetics of personal adornment. It establishes the colour sense as an artistic impulse, the exercise of which would soon lead to observation and further interest in the colours of nature, until the stage of preferences or taste was established.

It would appear, then, that although the appreciation of Shape commenced in the early thinking stages, Colour appreciation is earlier, having its root in our consciousness as an instinctive exercise of the sense of sight, together with those of touch, smelling, tasting, and hearing; whilst Shape appreciation has its root in a conscious and rational observance of natural phenomena.

Apart from the problem of an acknowledged standard which the old notion of absolute beauty had to face, there are the difficulties of occasional apathy and even revulsion; the change of opinion due to alteration of circumstances. All this was met in the old philosophies by accusing the subject of aberration: just as the failure to admire the normally admired was said to be bad taste. But the aberration is proof of the subjectivity of the beauty sense. We *can* and *do* get

tired of beautiful things. Over-familiarity will bring this about, when the appearance of a new stimulus will appear more delightful. And though no one but a naughty school-girl would say, "I hate it," the philosopher may with justification say, "I have no pleasure in it," without denying its claims.

The division between liking and disliking may be as fine as a knife edge, and once the balance is upset every trifling circumstance plays its part in the mind's response. Suggestion from others is most potent on either side, and many an enthusiast has begun as a proselyte.

The whole machinery of preference is so complicated that it appears to extend indefinitely into fields far removed from actual vision and to become nebulous. Yet all such airy conditions cannot but remove Beauty the farther from any theory of *prescribed* conformation or quality; and they render clear and obvious the diversities of response and opinion, which from a state of baffling inconsistency thus become matters of expectation and inevitability.

As to the "bad taste" dictum, we have seen in the case of the human figure, that differences of taste will not consistently admit the charge of badness. Everybody has a right to find beautiful what he can, where and when he can. The Attic sculptors do not seem to have thought so, or they would not have concerned themselves so seriously with canons such as the "Doryphoros" of Polyclitus. But their ideas were not universal, and to-day seem in danger of being finally abandoned. Phryne herself, the prototype of the Venus, who captivated Praxiteles and Apelles—to mention no others—had a figure which would have burst into tatters any modern frock. And she was sylphlike compared to the brides belonging to a certain savage tribe. These poor creatures are immured and over-fed for six months so that on emerging for the bridal ceremony they have white skins and are too immense to walk, when in the eyes of a bridegroom they are at last adorable. Whether anything atavistic could be traced here beyond the wish to have as much as possible of a good thing, I do not know.

Those who pin their faith to an absolute and objective

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Beauty have their best argument in classic sculpture, the admiration of which has survived through two milleniums. And the potency of that fact establishes a truth which does not invalidate the opposite theory ; because if, for the purpose of argument, it were agreed to place the claims of Beauty in things observed and not at all in the observer, those claims would be held by such objects or objective agencies as most often and most continuously win the responses of enlightened and sensitive minds.

When it is assumed by the "absolutists" that Beauty resides in a certain relationship of parts to the whole, then that relationship, as long as it lasts, must be an attribute of the object : it cannot be less of an attribute, when, by chance, no eye sees it. This arrangement of terms has always seemed inverted to me. I cannot accept the *certain relationship of parts*, which a canon of beauty demands, and the *generality of eyes* to see it : rather, *any relationship of parts* and a *certain pair of eyes* to find it comformable to fitness. To put the terms that way round is to account immediately for *de gustibus non est disputandum*, "One man's meat another's poison," and all the rest of it.

In theories of æsthetics the question always seems to be limited to whether or not Beauty exists independently of the admirer. Beauty is always regarded as an entity ; never as a condition. There never seems to be a notion that it may be an arbitrary influence more or less felt—not an actual beauty influence, but an influence that will "spell" Beauty (*i.e.*, cause pleasure) to one person and not to another, and much of it to one and little to another according to circumstances. Still less is there any question of Ugliness (displeasure) arising from the same cause.

The good old sunset is always dragged up as an example of a phenomenon obviously and invariably beautiful to all eyes while they are open, but doubtfully so if all eyes were to shut. First of all, I know several people who prefer other aspects of the sky to the western at sundown ; and Whistler dubbed sunsets "gaudy." These facts seem to undermine the inevitable ascription of *constancy* to the idea of beauty-absoluteness. In the second place, the question whether Beauty depends upon

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the fact of its being seen, seems to me to amount to nothing ; and I ask whether all philosophers from Plato downward have adopted deliberately a pose of childlike simplicity when they think. If we neither doubt the existence of the man nor of the sunset it ought to be easy to allow that when correspondence is set up between them by the man's vision a relationship occurs which is the man's emotion. But that emotion does not so mechanically coincide with vision that if he shuts his eyes he shuts it off like an electric current. Man has a memory ; and with eyes shut the sunset to him still possesses beauty or ugliness—which you will. If he died there would certainly be no more beauty for him, but that would not switch off the current from others who were enjoying or reviling the sunset with him before he died.

Of opposite responses to one set of influences there can surely be no doubt. In the case of the fattened brides to whom I have alluded, Paris would undoubtedly have withheld the apple on the plea of "insufficient merit shown by the entrants," and the fond savage bridegroom would have felt similarly towards the goddesses—certainly so towards our charming "herrings." Yet in either case it was the same influence or "message" that earned opinions so divided, and the medium only human vision. Alternative liking and disliking cannot have anything but purely subjective causes.

The foregoing corporeal illustrations prove perhaps the complex nature of the mind's preferences. The flattened curves of our slim ladies might or might not be preferred, *as curves*, to those of Phryne ; and those of the savage bride might be, *as segments of ellipses*, preferable to both. But our estimates of Beauty will not be whittled down to such simple propositions ; they are formed upon a sum of impressions furnished by, or in association with, every sense.

Much discussion has been rendered futile by confusing Beauty with Art. They are entirely different things. The confusion is probably due to Plato's recommendations as to weighing and measuring. This, according to C. E. M. Joad, is artistic training, and if that does not mean that an artist is powerless to produce beautiful pictures unless he is trained (a *bad non sequitur*) then it must mean that nobody can appreciate

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Beauty unless they can analyse it, which (with all due respect, and if I've got it right) is absurd.

Mr. Joad is a believer in the objective theory of Beauty. I will quote a passage from his "Common Sense Philosophy," page 126, by which it is not only possible to judge his arguments but also to see the way in which art and artists are presumed to have prior rights in Beauty—a perfectly gratuitous popular fallacy.

"The Form of Beauty exists independent and transcendent, and is therefore eternal and immutable. It is the cause of all the Beauty that attaches to the perishable objects of sense. Whether it will or will not attach itself to any particular object of artistic production is in the main a matter of chance—a fluke. The best way, however, of ensuring that it will so attach itself, is for the artist to discipline himself strictly in the exact sciences of measuring, weighing, and counting, recommended by Plato."

In the Appendix I have given the passage in the tenth book of "The Republic" from which this advice to painters is derived. The reader will see that Plato's recommendations are addressed not to painters at all, but to the critics of paintings or to those who would be likely, in Plato's fantastic instances, to mistake the picture of a bed drawn in perspective for an actual bed.

Mr. Joad continues :—

"Translated into modern terms, this means that an artist who has perfected himself in the technique of drawing and painting . . . will be more likely to produce a work of beauty than one who sets about his task uninstructed and without study."

Very likely ; but his studied and instructed drawing of a bed would probably suit Plato less well than an uninstructed one in which the sides could be shown as equal, not by perspective, but by linear measurement ! How Glaucon could have submitted to such nonsense it is difficult to imagine. But, of course, if your antagonist in an argument is permitted no answer but "Yes" and "True," it is easy to appear to have won.

"The use of the word ' fluke ' above," continues Mr. Joad,

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“is, however, designed to emphasise the point that no amount of training and study in the preliminary matters can ensure that the Form of Beauty will clothe the production. This coming of the Form knows no laws. It is the capricious and incalculable element in all Art. There are no rules by which it can be summoned.” Then why learn them, I ask?

But this Platonic recommendation provides admirably for the “wards” as I have called them, of the responsive mind. The better the mind is prepared for perceptions of instinctive fitness the more of them it can rate as Beauty. And whether the mind is prepared at all, either with weights and measures or with moral coercion, or whether it is simply unsophisticated, the sum of stimuli in an object to which it most consistently and persistently reacts with pleasure or with pain, will respectively bear the names of Beauty and Ugliness.

As far as I have been able to follow the theories of Æsthetics it has always been a wonder to me that nobody ever steps down out of the clouds to try to explain Beauty in terms of human practicability. It is either a “Form” or an “Idea” with the philosophers, and with the psychologists it is Empathy or some other outcome of mental disturbance in the spectator. And the spectator of Beauty is always a privileged person enjoying something to be definitely taken or left, like a drink; not something that, like a breeze, may be as gentle as a scarcely-felt caress or may overwhelm as a mighty rushing wind.

How does it help us in the slightest to be told that Beauty is a “universal”? Doubtless it is, for the purposes of fine-spun theories and their ever-attendant denials; but of what use is the fact to you, Reader, or to me, that Beauty together with Goodness and Truth are mental projections signifying nothing to anybody who is not arguing about them? And, after all, is it indisputable that Beauty is on the same footing as the other universals in answering to a definite idea of something understood?

It is possible to conceive of a man or a machine being actively good—we can visualise conformity to the best; or of a man or machine being actively true—we can visualise perfect coincidence; but the mind boggles (at least mine does)



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at a visualisation of anything being actively beautiful. If we tell a child to be good or truthful he can obey ; but he cannot obey an injunction to be beautiful.

According to the Platonists a "universal" is a generality of all the parts or "particulars" involved. Thus we speak of goodness when considering particular good actions. Granting this, how can we speak of Beauty as a generality of particular beauties ? We know no more what the particulars of Beauty are than we know what Beauty itself is. It is indeterminate and entirely relative ; whereas Goodness and Truth are both clear-cut firm concepts of which man can easily find "particulars" and apply the universal term of "Form."

We must regard Beauty as a result of an infinity of causes ; its potency ranging from the limit of sheer apathy to ecstatic enthusiasm. Some of those causes we can investigate and, with a knowledge of them, attune our minds to them. To regard Beauty as a simple quality that may be present or absent in things independently of the minds of men is to leave it in the clouds lifeless and cold.

Another champion of the objective theory (Dr. G. E. Moore) asks us to imagine a world that is in every respect delightful, and then another that is as entirely disgusting ; and he asks which of them has the best claim to exist. To me the matter is disposed of by the fact that it is not possible to imagine a world of either sort being respectively agreeable or disagreeable to *everybody* ; and that, I submit, is at once a charge of wrong premise, and an answer to the theorem. As for me, I am sure I should be bored to distraction in the conventional Paradise.

Admitting that there is no exclusive and simple Beauty stimulus, but only a liking, or preference, stimulus, it might yet be asked how we can separate our responses to Nature and the Fine Arts from those we make to more ordinary things. The answer is that we cannot. There is a sliding scale of responses from the highest and rarest to the most commonplace. Suppose we place our willing horse, the sunset, on the highest plane together with flowers, healthy children, beautiful women, and all other natural things of which our admiration may be so intense as to result not in a smile but a sigh. Then passing over

that other kind of delights which do not appeal through the eye (that is to say, all works of the sister arts that owe their beauty of Form to sight by analogy, as Poetry and Music) let us place on the next plane Phidias, Praxiteles, Michelangelo, Raphael, and the Venetians, as beauty-evoking types. A little lower might come fine buildings of all ages—Parthenon, Taj Mahal, etc. ; on the next plane, furniture and cabinet-making ; next, fine clothes. But where have we arrived ? Clothes must not only include kingly raiment and Court magnificence, but also the Louis-heeled shoes of our factory girls ! Likewise the plane that holds Michelangelo and the Venetians must logically embrace Cinema art (not pictures but *pickshers* !) and even the illustrated advertisements in our newspapers and periodicals. Is it possible to find a lower plane ?

As stimulus, all this typified array, in kind and in degree, must be looked upon as equally important. The grading is in ourselves, and there is not the slightest difference in kind between the factory girl's honest "Aint it beautiful ?" and the connoisseur's more stilted encomiums. Possibly the girl's outburst is the purer emotion for being less sophisticated. Beauty is nothing more than this response ; and its qualifications and varieties are due to the subject's mental make-up : heredity, environment, education, habits, proclivities, and momentary mood. Once I was sauntering through the National Gallery with an artist and his daughter, a lady of about twenty-five. After half an hour she confessed to being "fed-up," and we had to terminate our examination of the inimitable treasures of the past. I hope that in my apologies I succeeded in assuring her of my sympathetic understanding, for I felt it honestly. How often had I myself found more pleasure in an antique frame than in the picture it embellished ! And if a frame, why not the furniture of a gallery ; and if that, why not the dresses of the lady visitors ? The pleasure we are or are not able to take in any of these things constitutes their beauty—nothing else does ; and if a lady's hat displays certain lines and curves, at certain angles ; and if its three-dimensional shape is such as gives fascinating *nuances* of light and shade ; and if these play into, modify and enrich the colours of the materials—I say if all this takes place—then it is possible that a quicker

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response may be evoked from a young mistress's hat than from an old master entire. The only point to remember is that the most intellectual beauty is that in the seeking and re-seeking of which we do not tire.

But here is enough of metaphysics for the present. It is much to be doubted whether by taking thought for these things we can win rarer joys or feel more readily and intensely that benign and exquisite exaltation which rewards the contemplation of a fine work of art. Theories come and go upon the heels of each other ; but thus to probe into the fog with a long pole is vanity and vexation of spirit, of which Art at its most glorious epoch knew little, troubling less. Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Kant, Schopenhauer, Bergson, Croce, Freud, and all the others coming between : what an array ! And to what purpose ? The purest and most spontaneous reflexes and responses are direct and free from the "butting-in" of introspective self-consciousness and conjecture. Weights and measures are unthinkable except for pedants. The accumulation of philosophies and criticism has not helped our age to retrieve its falling away from the beauty level of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when in Italy patrons outnumbered painters and common things were made beautiful at any cost.

The outlook on things to which I have confessed is perhaps but the scepticism of the satisfied. I remember how, as a little boy bursting with the enthusiasm of a first introduction to Euclid, I ran to my mother with : " I'll prove to you that all the sides of that triangle are exactly the same length." My mother replied, " I don't want any proof, my child. I can see they are with my own eyes." After fifty years I can see how right she was. Wherein for human emotion does the virtue of geometry lie ? The Pyramids were built before Euclid was born. To a painter Euclid is damnation. " A line is length without breadth" is nonsense to one to whom, if breadth does not exist, neither does the line. In literature likewise, " the thin red line " asks a visualisation of breadth whereby to carry its colour. Equilateral triangles are the more beautiful when their approach to perfect equilateralism stops short at reasonable human effort ; and the factors of beauty in human effort are obvious mathematical shortcomings. They, and not the

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ideals of thought, are the agents for human feeling (sympathy). By scientific sophism the practical warm and human idea is ratted off into the infinite and the abstract, beyond the ken of Tom, Dick and Harry ; beyond even average intelligence ; beyond the few and next the fewer, until it becomes the occupation of a very few elderly gentlemen who sit in arm-chairs and call each other names. All this is evermore to come out by that same door wherein we went. "That being so," the reader will ask "why is there any æsthetics here at all?" And the author can only plead "A sop to Cerberus." A former book of mine was praised by all critics except the one of a leading weekly, by whom it was "turned down" as having no aspect of æsthetics. No more had the inimitably great utterances of Sir George Clausen, whose published addresses to students excel in simple and moving wisdom that convinces the unsophisticated. No more had those of Reynolds, and of Leonardo. By the child and by the childlike, Truth, when it appears, is known for Beauty ; and that, as the poet declares, is all we need to know.

## CHAPTER IV

### FORM AND CONTENT

THE average person who has never looked at works of art except to be interested in the subjects they represent scarcely knows that there is anything else worth noting. If there were not, however, there would be little use in the Fine Arts at all. The story-book and the Cinema would be all-sufficient.

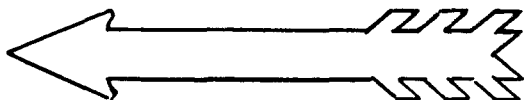
But although we must look for something more than a story if we want to enjoy pictures, statuary, architecture, and sculptured gems, yet subject-matter *is* an important point after all, for there is no denying that it provides the first step in appreciation. Out of the interest of the literary message grows the interest in the artistic message, and from the enjoyment of the artistic message comes the appreciation of those technical matters that make up Form.

It follows from this that a work of art is apprehended in two ways. The spectator may be, and usually is, quite unconscious of this dual aspect ; but he could, if questioned, give an account of his impressions that would easily subdivide into two categories. One of these subdivisions would be under the heading of Form, and the other of Content. It is, of course, scarcely necessary to mention that the latter word is used for the meaning implied when the stress is upon the first syllable ; that is, capacity or power of containing. Nor can it be necessary to explain that the word "Form" will not in this place be used as a synonym for shape but will signify the *container* ; and "Content" that which it contains. Neither is this use of the term "Form" precisely what is implied in the Platonic "Form," which is necessarily an abstraction ; but it is something like it, since it is an abstraction from the picture of all that is seen by the physical eye ; the outer or unthinking eye ; in fact, the whole picture before one has begun thinking about

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it ; design, colour, tone, and all their subdivisions and attributes. Observe that colour comes in as part of Form. A moment's consideration of these attributes as we stand before a picture is enough for us to ask ourselves what they signify. We ask, in fact, for their Content.

Perhaps there is no simpler and more cogent an example of these dual qualities than the symbol of the arrow. Its Form



evokes instantaneously and unmistakably the Content of Direction. It was known to primitive man and is to-day used as a guide to motorists. Young and old, savant and savage in all parts of the earth know its meaning without need of a word. The Content of a work of art is only less simple because its Form is more complex. It will comprise all the spiritual part of the work of art ; its subject-matter or the tale it tells, its beauty, its sadness or its gayness, its humour, its action, repose, attractiveness, repulsion, its elevating or its degrading power.

To take a very popular example : In the well-known picture of "The Laughing Cavalier," by Hals, the subject-matter is a gentlemanly soldier ; but the Content is a great deal more than that. It includes all further ideas to which the picture may give rise, such as the characteristics of a man-at-arms who is also probably a courtier ; the old-world flavour given by his costume ; above all, the guesses at the temperament of the man who smiles with such quiet assurance and superiority ; his urbanity and good nature ; his air of proud self-satisfaction ; his ceremoniousness and its hint of swagger. Since all this could have been given in various ways besides those chosen by the painter, we arrive at the fact that the Content is the fixed aim of the picture, and the Form the alterable and piecemeal machinery of it.

For the sake of clarity we may class together all the sensory pleasures, as apart from those of *reason* ; and into that classification we may put the pleasures resulting from fine shapes, suave lines, pleasing colour, graduated and contrasting tones and every other delight in art that is æsthetic in its nature. All such

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sensuous appeal in pictures may therefore be classed as *Æsthetic Content*. This will also include certain psychological abstractions, such as the cogency with which the design affects us ; the effect of colour upon our minds, and other matters that are influences of Form. For it must be remembered that a work of art might represent nothing at all that is recognisable in nature ; arabesques\* for instance, or involved geometrical designs ; yet such things would have Content ; that is, they would *contain* something that the spectator could think about apart from their actual shapes. Many artists have maintained that the *Æsthetic* is the only real and legitimate Content in works of art, and that any others must be subsidiary and extraneous ; in other words, that Art is for Art's sake only. With that view I do not find it possible to agree. Others maintain that a second division of Content, namely *Literary Content*, is equally indispensable, and to that view I beg to subscribe.

*Literary Content* is a phrase which must be given a wide connotation. It must not be thought to apply exclusively to a story illustrated in the picture, or to such particulars as we have noted in "The Laughing Cavalier." It includes all that, of course ; but the word "literary" in this case is employed to denote anything in a picture which might be described by the *letter* ; that is, the written or spoken word. Thus landscape and still-life have *Literary Content*, since the relationships between the depicted objects can be matter for mental apprehension and uttered description.

We have then two divisions of Content, the *Æsthetic* and the *Literary*. The first existing alone amounts to Art for Art's sake merely. The second existing alone amounts to illustration, anecdote, record, allegory, and mere imaginings or abstractions. And all these things might be and often are represented so crassly and crudely as to make the picture of them a thing to be avoided. But when both the *Æsthetic* and the *Literary* are admirably combined in one picture there results the true work of art. And if added to these a third

\* Arabesque. In Arab art, representation of the human figure was forbidden by the Koran. The Arabs concentrating, therefore, upon plant forms and geometric patterns, evolved a style of ornament which was known as arabesque.

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division of Content can be made, namely, Craftsmanship, then we get the supreme work of art. Good craftsmanship is a joy in itself, apart from the beauty of the result or of subject-matter, and it has a wide and even popular appeal. We may call it the Technical Content. This, however, when existing alone is equally ineffectual, amounting to mere virtuosity. Form and Content are necessarily involved in each other. Form is, in fact, the medium of the Content, and the two have been so inextricably welded all through the history of Art that it is well-nigh impossible for any but rigorous critics to detach the one from the other. We have only to look at the varying Forms Art has taken in the antiquity of different countries to see this at a glance. Tradition has played an enormous part in the development of Art. Men's beliefs running through mythology, religion, history, and philosophy, have determined the Form so definitely that artists have been powerless to escape it. The artists of the early and late civilisations in Africa, Asia, and Europe, have each worked out a course of development widely dissimilar, yet progressing contemporaneously. In every case the Form has been the inevitable one dictated by the beliefs of the race. Not until modern times has the universality of art-form been possible, and even to-day tradition is valued and guarded,

We see, therefore, that an ancient Egyptian's idea of depicting the solemn ritual of a funeral procession was as much at the mercy of prescribed Form as was the ancient Greek's idea of presenting the attributes of a god, or an Italian's aspiration towards devotion in a Madonna altar-piece.

After all, what else could be expected? In each case the art-form was a sort of language of the people. They knew no other. It was the outcome of traditions they inherited and of the habits of the life they led. To them therefore it conveyed the Content of the work of art in the only possible way.

We, centuries afterwards, are able to look upon these works of the past and see how the Form varied whilst the Content did not. The very difference of styles in the Form helps us to detach it. But when we come to the works of our own time we are almost, not quite, in the position of the ancients. We also are the slaves of tradition, of habits, and of our own



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culture ; therefore the works of art of our own time speak to us in that language of Form which is part of our life, and into which we read our own ideas of the work's Content, because of the response of our experience.

We are not quite in the position of those who have gone before us, because we have all their traditions added to our own conventions, and thus we are furnished with wider knowledge of style generally and of certain styles in particular. We can detect in works of our own day the Italian manner here, the Greek form there, an Egyptian influence in another place. By this advantage of a wider purview of styles we are to a greater extent able to see where Form does detach itself from Content in the judgment of those who have knowledge.

The material in which artists have worked and the tools they have used have likewise left their evidences upon Form. This appears in comparing the results of the arts of antiquity ; the earthy material of the earliest civilisations, the granite and basalt of the Egyptians, the more amenable marble of the Greeks, the bricks and tiles of the Romans introduced for their greater building schemes. Form changes likewise in the graphic arts as it passes from the frescoes to tempera and oil-painting, gaining freedom and artistic control at each stage. In the engraving arts the same modification of form accompanies variety in method between copper-engraving, etching, wood-engraving, and steel-engraving. Lithography brings yet another handling, and water-colour painting creates its own inimitable style.

There is a "best way" in each method which the artist takes instinctively as a line of least resistance, and the resulting work of art displays its categorical "difference" as its peculiar merit.

Only by first differentiating between Form and Content can it be seen how admirably in one example, or how feebly in another, Form and Content have been made to support each other. To determine this is the beginning and end of Art criticism.

Moreover, when the Form is appreciated for its own sake, there comes into the consciousness a host of enjoyments undreamt of by those whose response is to the Content alone.

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Here, then, we have three ways of judging and enjoying a work of art. The first way is by the appreciation of the Form alone ; the second of the Content alone ; and the third and perfect way, by appreciation of the co-operation of Form and Content together.

Let us consider the impressions likely to be made upon a person of average powers of observation, but with no special artistic proclivities, when first confronted with an array of pictures of which he had no previous knowledge. Such a person enters a picture gallery, and his eye swiftly sweeps over the walls. What does he observe ? Not being yet within range of the influence of any one of the pictures, he will probably notice distinctly only one general characteristic, and that is their size. The next instant reveals them as of darker or of lighter tone. Steadier glances make him conscious of the shapes that their particular designs present ; the cutting of trees against the sky, or of any dark objects against light passages in them. Should this cutting-out of the pattern be very demonstrative, he may notice it first of all. When he approaches a picture, the factor of its size sinks almost out of consideration, unless it is extremely large or extremely small ; and a similar disregard of its tone will follow, though in a lesser degree and more slowly. Colour then begins to assert itself in place of what was first regarded as tone, and at the same time the spectator's mind begins to concern itself with what the picture is all about. This moment of transition is the crucial moment. Up to this instant he has been observing all the presentments of Form : now he is also interesting himself in subject-matter, which is a part of Content. If he could develop his powers at this point of combined interest without passing on to other ground, he would remain on the footing of the best judges and the keenest enjoyers of Fine Art.

What the ordinary person does invariably at this moment, however, is to cast off all the grapplings of Form which had been engaging him, and give his attention entirely to the tale told, or the matter presented, in the picture. In the first moments he was stepping in the track of Art pure and simple : the most exalted art-critic could have done no more. But when he drew near enough to be aware of the subject, the observa-

tions he had already made (which were to him, of course, utterly empty of meaning and perhaps of charm) proved themselves too feeble to hold him any longer. From that moment his concepts of life and the outer world, finding echo in the subject of the picture, possessed him entirely. It would not have been so with an artist or amateur of the Arts (using the word "amateur" in its proper meaning of lover). An amateur would have had concepts apart from life and the outer world; concepts of the beautiful, and these would have found their response in the Form of the picture. A so-called "expert," indeed, would probably go to the other extreme and never notice the subject-matter at all.

In the middle between these extremes lies the wisdom of art-appreciation. That middle stage admits influences from both Form and Content. Receiving both together, we see, if the art is good and the work well done, that the Form expresses the Content; and not only expresses it, but supports it, enforces it, is in fact part of it. The tale is told to the best advantage by the *manner* of painting, even more than by the *matter* that is painted.

Content arises out of Form; and to make it do so is obviously the whole duty of Art.

The mind of man originates nothing. What it does is to respond to every outside stimulus. The *tabula rasa* of the older philosophers is now a little discredited, but we must grant that the mind of the infant receives impressions through the senses. According to Benedetto Croce, the first impressions (of the newly-born infant) are those belonging to æsthetics. With this we are able to conform our theory that the beauty sense has its origin in the senses; not in the reason. An infant has not yet begun to reason.

Possibly primitive instincts play a larger part in our sensuous activities than in our reasoning activities. They are concerned with the purely physical appetites and predilections; and we may believe that all propensities towards show, personal adornment, aggrandisement, sport, fighting, and all physical luxuries are impelled as much by instinct as are our appetites. This would account for the love of gay colour and for bedizenment in the savage.

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The point is that the mind responds most readily to outer stimuli when the instincts have, so to speak, attuned our concepts to the utmost receptivity. To attempt an example :—

If we imagine a diagram of a series of vertical lines presented to the eye of an unsophisticated person, we may be able to trace the stages of the process. The person would consider such an image for a moment, and then accept it, not as something new and strange, but as something he had already experienced. It would tally with his concepts of *that kind of thing*, and he would respond to it as a condition of things which could be related to his own existence. This is what we mean by the terms likely, reasonable, feasible, etc. His concepts of this condition of things would probably remind him of trees, or masts, or palings. As trees are more elemental and more usual he would probably relate the diagrams to his concepts of woods and forests. And his concepts of woods and forests would reflect upon its lines something of the attributes and qualities of trees from his experiences, inherited, accumulated and correlated. He would now associate with the lines of the diagram qualities such as height, slenderness, and an upreaching even beyond their actual measurements. He would, in fact, have wandered from the diagram into dreams about it. Then by the operation of his instincts these very qualities with which he had endowed the diagram would gather a further significance in relation to himself. Since all instincts are machinery for physical well-being, this man's instincts would give a graver colour to the qualities his concepts had furnished. They would become tintured with fear. Fear, either of the darkness of the woods or of attack. The tallness of the trees would signify the effort and anxiety of climbing them for security, and also the possible risk in doing so.

Helplessness engendered by fear is an admittance of inferiority ; thus, dread and helplessness might be interpreted as respect for superiority. By association of ideas respect implies a kind of admiration, and the sum of all might be a healthy feeling that tall trees were things grim, perhaps, but imposing ; things to be revered and not thought lightly

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of. This would resolve, in the less instinctive part of the person's mind, as a feeling of *dignity*. Dignity is exalted worth.

Of course, this is an absurdly laboured little farce, and is only elaborated, because there is no other way, than by the clumsy means of words, to indicate the inner spirit of one's meaning. If, in reality, some such process went on in a man's mind by which a few lines could give him ideas of dignity, it would be at a level too deep and hidden for even his own consciousness.

Its application to the diagram is made for the purpose of explaining what is meant by the stimulus that can be received from a picture of tall trees (Fig. 1). Such a picture would possess a Form corresponding to the diagram, and it would be the stimulus from the Form that would evoke the æsthetic Content of Dignity and all that dignity implies. The Literary Content would be derived from the proper and convincing presentment of the trees in a suitable setting, and with fitting effects of light, shade, and colour.

Here I must safeguard against misapprehension by mentioning that, of course, the aforesaid concepts do not apply to trees only but to every great shape extending vertically upward. It is the original concept of *tree* which attracts to itself similar concepts from similar Form. Thus we feel cognate emotion to that of *tall tree* in tall column and pier, tall and precipitous rocks, and so forth.

So much for vertical factors. Let us now look at horizontals. Without troubling about a bald diagram, let us consider the aspects of certain objects lying horizontally. Unquestionably, the inherent significance of a horizontal posture in objects is that they are inert. I have made a sketch of placid water, a fallen tree and a recumbent figure (Fig. 2). I use these in order to come at once at the emotions which the concepts of horizontality engender. A tree that falls full length upon the ground can fall no further. A man who is killed does not remain upright unless the body is supported. And water that is not actuated by other forces remains still and at its lowest level. We cannot conceive of such things changing their postures if left to themselves. They can only

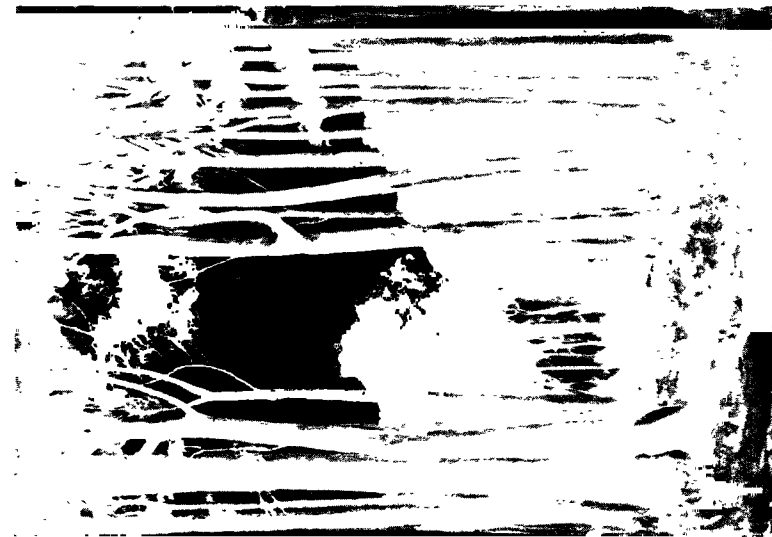


FIG. 1

EXAMPLES OF VERTICAL FORM AND III. VISTA

*See page 48*

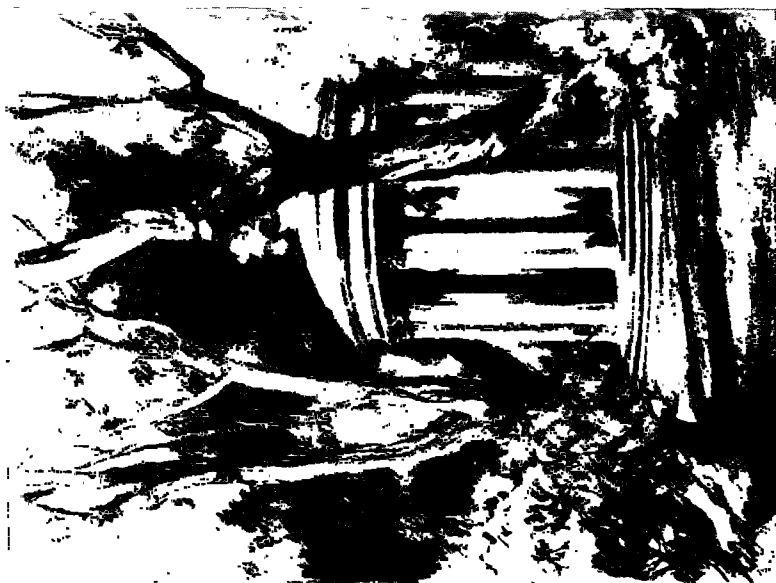


FIG. 10

*Do face page 42*



FIG. 2



FIG. 3

EXAMPLES OF HORIZONTAL AND DIAGONAL FORM

*Go face page 43*

## FORM AND CONTENT

gradually disappear by disintegration ; and that would be nothing but an emphasising of their helpless inertia.

To these facts is related by association the "all is over" concept ; and so it comes about that the Content of horizontal Form is stillness, repose, calm, and inertia.

Still considering lines, we come to the remaining variety, diagonals. Whilst the horizontal line is purely static, and the vertical largely so, the diagonal is dynamic. It is, so to speak, on its way between the vertical and the horizontal. It is, therefore, suggestive of movement, action, force. As its name implies, it runs through and across things.

In the mind's accumulated experiences, those natural objects that resemble lines in being longer than they are broad, such as slender trees, grasses, wisps of cloud, rain, as well as the outlines or contours of long-sided things, lean over when impelled forward, one end of them being retarded by weight, by friction, or by attachment, the free-end thus advanced before the impulsive force or motor power. An object longer than it is broad is postulated merely as best showing the phenomenon. It may be taken that objects of any sort are subject to the same laws.

I give a sketch showing a figure escaping from a tree which is being blown down. The figure's own motive force causes the head to be in advance of the centre of gravity, while the feet are momentarily retained by the ground (Fig. 3).

Some such concept of force or motion actuates our response to the Form of diagonals. Even in the case of mechanical or architectural struts, buttresses and shorings, which, though they may not suggest motion because of attachment at both ends, yet evoke the idea of force in resistance.

So far, we have dealt with the three primary postures of straight lines : the vertical, the horizontal, and the diagonal. In each of these postures repetition does not alter the kind of Content, though it may intensify the degree. But where there are groups of differently disposed lines a very marked alteration in Content occurs. When, for example, a group of lines radiate from a centre they seem to lose the significance of their primary postures in assuming that of their collective relationships. That relationship is to my mind a beautiful one ; I



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admit to a lively sense of motion in radiating lines, and am ready to believe that motion is at the root of the beauty of divergence and convergence. It is almost impossible to avoid this progressive feeling in the diagram of the fan, considered either from the outer edge to the fulcrum or rivet, or in the opposite direction (Fig. 4).

Radiation has the strongest content of movement of any line-disposition. It connotes a dispersive movement from, and attraction towards, a centre. All artists—especially those of the comic journals—find radiation a Form particularly rich in Content: the phenomena of sun-rays, of explosion, of spraying, splashing, and all such divergence and expansion on the one hand, and of convergence and contraction on the other; the latter, by means of linear perspective, serving also to give distance and pictorial depth. We may add also the *pointing* power of converging lines.

So far our lines have been straight. What of curving lines? Curves are usually associated with Grace; though how Grace can be strictly defined I do not know. It is one of those mysteries that are commonly well understood. To my mind, the Content of a curve is smooth progress and growth—progression without disruptive force. To turn a screw entails quite a different mental exhilaration from banging in a nail. A fine curve is sinuous, particularly the double-curve, or S shape, known as “Hogarth’s line of Beauty.” The real charm about sinuosity is that it eludes resistance, and is never brought up short by obstacles as the straight direction may be. A snake can progress in a way that looks as though its undulations were conforming to an invisible track laid out before it; the tail going over the same points as the head. A similar illusion exists in the spiral or Archimedean screw, which seems to progress as it is turned. All this is related to smooth progress, suavity, and perfect effectiveness. And these are qualities that belong to growth. In the vegetable world, particularly, the slow and smooth development has its Form very largely in Curves; and it can be for no other reason that the Art of Ornament has gone so consistently and persistently to the vegetable kingdom for inspiration, for there radiating curves abound. (Fig. 5.)

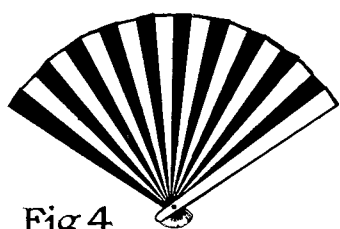


Fig.4



Fig.5

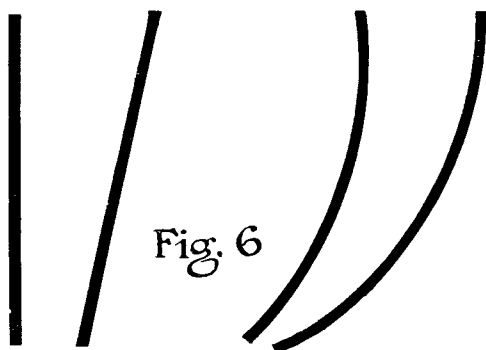


Fig. 6

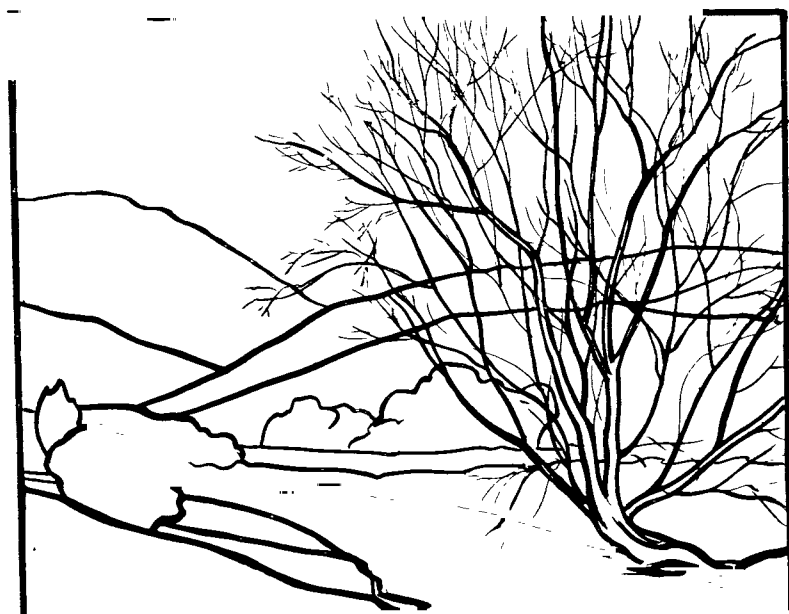


Fig. 7



ST. HELENA, VISION OF THE INVENTION OF THE CROSS  
VERONESE

## FORM AND CONTENT

Reverting to straight radiations, we see that the space between any two lines is wedge-shaped; and it is to this and not to the lines that I have attributed the real pictorial value of radiation (Fig. 6). If we curve this wedge-shape we add to it the further quality of Grace. The wedge-shape now turns upon itself, and does not extend to a degree out of pictorial bounds. The carrying power is no less potent, since the decrease, or increase, as the case may be, still occurs.

It is not too much to say that most pictures rely upon this form of the curved wedge-shape for their fascination of design, no matter whether they be landscape or figure subjects. Here is a diagram (Fig. 7) which shows how these elements combine to make harmonious masses in landscape. I could, of course, have made these lines diagrammatically much more convincing, but I did not wish to be accused of special pleading, and have not gone out of my way to find even unusual radiation in legitimate landscape. As it is, the wedge-shapes are at all points and the tree sets up its own system of radiation. Radiation, as we meet it in landscape, is the outcome either of vegetable growth, which expands as it progresses, or of perspective lines. Architectural subjects hold curvilinear radiation when perspective operates upon circular steps, string courses in round towers, vault groinings, and so forth. As to the human figure, it may be said to be made up of shapes that come into the category of curved wedge-shapes; and the folds of drapery consist almost entirely of the same kind of shapes. Veronese's picture of "St. Helena's Vision" shows how this perfectly adorable work relies for the beauty of its design on radiating lines and the spaces between them—a perfect symphony of curved wedge-shapes.

As in life we get a moral tonic from a man who is unbending and straightforward, even to the point of brusqueness, especially if he is surrounded by suave diplomatists, so amongst an assemblage of curves, the straight line acquires merit, and its strength becomes beauty. Thus opposites enhance the value of each other. In the Veronese picture the simple right-angle of the open window is an example of the effect of contrast of straight with curved lines. The figure without those straight lines would lack all its significance as part of the design, though

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the beauty of the curves themselves would not suffer. Similarly, the vertical and horizontal of the window-frame would be bald statements indeed, without the figure. The combination of straight lines with curves is one of the most beautiful resources of Art. It is the union of strength and grace.

Art requires all such mutual tempering and contrasting of opposites. Sometimes the juxtaposition works as a mitigation of opposing qualities ; sometimes as an enhancement. In a very nondescript subject there may be a conglomeration of stimuli of all sorts in the Form resulting only in a Confusion of Content. Out of such a chaos the artist arrives at his clear, simple, and chosen emotion by elimination of all that does not serve his purpose. We must understand, in regard to opposites and extremes, that the artist's prerogative is to adjust his mixtures in the proportion that best conveys his message ; intensifying here, suppressing there, the principles which give character to a work, so that the exact equilibrium is at last obtained to create the desired response in the spectator. We should never expect to find a picture evoking one Content only. No picture worth the name has ever been made entirely of vertical lines, nor entirely of horizontal and diagonal, nor entirely of straight lines. That *reductio ad absurdum* has, however, been very closely approached in recent years. The "cubists" have frequently produced things entirely of straight lines, but I never heard of anyone coveting them.

We frequently find vertical units making together one horizontal factor, as in palings, bridges, and trees regarded as woods. This combination of opposites does not amount to more than neutralisation. But a bold contrast of opposing units can much enhance the interest of an antithesis.

It would be impossible, even if it were desirable, to touch on every aspect of Form that could be isolated in this way as a stimulus to subjective responsiveness. There are a few that owe something of their power partly to literary interest. One, particularly, that is on the border line between æsthetic and literary content is the aspect of Sublimity. This seems to be the outcome of things unusually big. Even objects having no claim to beauty may attain to sublimity if they are large

## FORM AND CONTENT

enough. The ancient Egyptians understood this well. In pictorial representations there is no way of suggesting sublimity but by setting up a comparison with the human figure. That is where literary interest comes in. Take ever so mild, gentle, and small an object—here are a poppy and some corn-stalks (Fig. 8)—and it will be seen that even at life-size they would not look imposing. If, however, we were to insert a pigmy figure (Fig. 9), the scale of the poppy would jump twenty diameters. The spectator would no longer identify himself with the figure, but with the poppy. The figure would stand for a height of 6 feet, not an inch, and the poppy and corn-stalks would become colossal, unearthly, no longer being of normal scale.

Serenity seems to result from horizontal Form most effectively, and also from evenness of tone. At any rate, one would not employ a composition abounding in diagonals and patchy lights and darks such as would be proper for a battle or hunting scene if one wanted to induce a mood of stillness and serenity in the spectator.

And so one might go on through all the moods of feeling, the impulsion of which could be discovered with but little thought. Such broad generalisations as the gay and the grave are obvious; moods easily seen to result from lightness or severity of line respectively; from pure or from neutral colour; from bright or from dull tone.

It is worth while considering one or two principles of pictorialism that owe their fascination to Literary Content also. For example, the Vista; that is, the looking-out through and between near objects, is not based upon any strictly æsthetic principles, although, of course, many are involved, such as Verticality and Contrast. A Vista is certainly Form, but is also Content, because it is the delineation of a definite thing; and it is by the literary interest that it appeals. I take it that this and all such pictorial incidents address themselves to instincts of care for our well-being.

Primordial man, to whom shelter was almost as important as food, must have formed very strong concepts of the value of shelter for what it implied. To him, holes, caves and umbrageous trees were the chief if not the only facilities for

security from danger and inclement weather before he commenced to build. And when the building epoch had arrived the concept of security was no less a shaded place, with its entry. The sensation of well-being survives to-day in our little savages—the children—who delight in cubby-holes and improvised tents. Pictures which represent interiors with simple and direct lighting and a steep range of tone have, perhaps on this account, a fuller æsthetic appeal than have brilliantly-lit interiors—ballrooms, for example—where the lighting is diffused and the idea of a hidden retreat is not induced. The pleasure is in looking *into* the dark place, or in looking *out* of it in the satisfaction of occupation. In the case of a shelter that has no walls we do both, in looking *through* it, the shelter idea remaining and causing the pleasurable feeling when one sees it depicted in pictorial art. It may be primitive in structure or otherwise—an open temple, an arbour, a market hall, even a bandstand. In the sketch (Fig. 10) the temple is adopted and is reinforced by the tree shelter naturally grown to an arbour. (See plate facing page 42.)

The mental harking-back that I have dared to postulate in all these instances would not, of course, be *consciously* gone through in every case by the artist any more than it would be in the mind of the spectator. The results of such mental processes would emerge only as intuitional promptings in the artist. When he sets himself to probe and study these intuitions, and comes to have some knowledge of the potentialities of stimuli, he can, of course, avail himself of their help by going out to meet them, so to speak. For example, in pictures of scenes of violence he will adopt a Form abounding in clash and contrast, whether it be in composition, colour, or tone. And for one of serenity he will employ suave and orderly lines and masses, avoiding diagonals; his tones will be gradated rather than contrasted, and his colour as harmonious as he can make it.

The aspects of Form that have been dealt with are those which exist independently of an artist's use of them. They are intrinsic. But the artist has the power of combining elements of Form in order to evoke a Content from the composition of his design. Perhaps the most striking instance of the power



FIG. 8

THE HUMAN STANDARD AS A FACTOR IN SCALE



FIG. 9

[To face page 48]





THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN  
MATTEO

of this choice lies in the alternatives of Symmetry and Asymmetry or disorder ; and, strange as it may seem, Symmetry proves to be the instinctive choice, whenever there is a conscious effort towards design. It would not be seen in a mere representation such as a primitive cave-painting, but it is obvious in the decoration of implements and the patterns upon materials. In ceremonial formations it is paramount. Witness Stonehenge and any early votive structure or the furnishings of such structure. The savage sets up an idol or a symbol and gives it prominence by placing things of much less importance on either side. This plan has survived in the temples of Tibet, and in those of Ancient Europe down to our present-day churches. It can be seen in the ceremonial of kings of all ages ; in processions, and indeed, on the homely mantelpiece where a pair of vases flanks the clock which holds the central position. The architect has consistently followed this plan throughout the ages in those cases where ideas of order have arisen above those of mere convenience and economy.

In figure-subject pictures the " setting " is of great importance when this idea of reverence is to be enforced, and therefore painters have always had recourse to the elevated position, or the throne, for the central figure ; and as far as architectural features are introduced they almost invariably conform to a system of deference by being symmetrically disposed with regard to the chief object. The pediment of the Greek temple contains figures more or less equally placed on either side of a central one, as those of the Ægina and the Parthenon temples show. In painting, thousands of religious pictures rely for their Content of reverence either upon symmetrical architecture in the design, or upon a central panel to which folding panels are hinged as in the triptych, or, again, upon the symmetrical arrangement of attendant saints and angels round the chief Personage.

An example of the latter arrangement is seen in " The Assumption of the Virgin," by Matteo (1430-1495), of the Sienese School. This picture, which is in the National Gallery, includes an episode in the life of the doubting St. Thomas, who is seen below in the act of receiving the Virgin's

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girdle, which was dropped down to him in pity for his unbelief as to the Virgin's ascension to Heaven. The saint was absent at the time of the Assumption and asked to have the tomb opened, only to find it empty, as shown in the picture. It is rather a curious fact that the exhaustive Mrs. Jameson, whilst mentioning every other reference to this legend in works of art, makes no allusion to this most important picture.

To take another noteworthy instance, "The Ansidei Madonna," by Raphael (1483-1520) also in the National Gallery; it is immediately seen how the throne and its steps, the piers and arches together conduce to a feeling of *worth* in the central group, just as a jewel is set off by its setting. But not only in these architectural features has Raphael evoked the Content of veneration by a symmetrical Form; he has likewise disposed the figures of John the Baptist and St. Nicholas in a balanced manner, like guardians or attendants for the Divinities.

This is the answer to all the expressions of disapproval that come from the common-sense people who say that such arrangements are absurd because they are unreal. Nobody knew better than Raphael that the Virgin never in her life nursed Her Son on a throne in such surroundings. The painter's realism did not take that aspect, but it very wisely went as far as possible in impressing the devotee with the saintly grace of the figures and the structural feasibility of the whole scene.

The object of all such votive pictures may have been manifold. Certainly the popes, cardinals, and other dignitaries who commissioned them had ideas of the beautification of their churches, and pride and rivalry was perhaps an incentive also; but the ostensible reason for these works of art was the impressment of the devotional spirit upon unlettered worshippers. Besides the representation of Persons of the God-head there were also patron saints whose presentments would affect the emotions of those hoping for intercession and personal benefits to be won by active piety of a suppliant. The power of the popes lay in the unquestioning devoutness of the masses.

But such an aspect is of general application. There are further points of the Content belonging to this picture particu-



THE VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH SS. JOHN BAPTIST AND NICHOLAS OF BARI  
[THE "MADONNA DEGLI ANSOLO"]  
RAPHAEL



## FORM AND CONTENT

larly. Why, for example, has the artist represented St. Nicholas in such a way as to make him seem irreverently indifferent to the Divine Presence? John is, on his part, touchingly worshipful. The explanation, to my mind, is that Raphael, who had an artistic and a logical conscience, felt the anomaly of so realistically introducing into the company a man who was born three and a half centuries later than the others. He was no doubt told to introduce him, but he partly salved his conscience, and thus to some extent preserved the unities of Time and Place, by omitting any touch of recognition of St. Nicholas by the Virgin and John, and any from him to them. John's mission was to proclaim the Messiah, and this he does, pointing in adoration. But the Bishop knew of the Messiah only through Holy Writ, and that he is represented as studying. This attitude emphasises his separateness mundanely, whilst his presence in the scene exalts his personality in a spiritual way.

There can be read a further Content of allegory, upon which the papal authority would doubtless set much store. By the rough and primitive clothing of the Baptist the humble origin of the Church is indicated, whilst the gorgeous vestments of the Bishop show to what greatness and glory the Church had risen.

As an item of purely literary interest the three balls at the feet of the Bishop excite some curiosity. Mrs. Jameson tells us in her "Sacred and Legendary Art" that those golden balls are symbols of the three purses which the good Saint, always a friend to the poor and afflicted, threw one by one on consecutive nights into the window of a poor man who otherwise would have had to sell his daughter into slavery. This tale was one of the best known of the Saint's many acts and miracles of mercy; and the balls, which were originally handkerchiefs in which the gold was tied up, had become, in Raphael's time, the distinguishing attributes of St. Nicholas of Bari for those who could not read.

In the alternative category of Form, the asymmetrical, there is, of course, endless variety because irregularity is infinite. Although Nature tends to symmetry in the constructions of individual objects, as is proved by observation of crystals,

plants, animals, and man himself, yet the disposition of natural objects which make up the scenes that meet our eyes is fortuitous and therefore can very seldom approach the symmetrical. It follows that in order to make a pictorial composition appear natural the artist must avoid symmetry, because any suggestion of it would be a suggestion of the unnatural. Yet it may occasionally happen that a perfectly natural scene partakes of artificiality introduced by intention, as in formal gardens, avenues, the "lay-out" of buildings, to say nothing of those ceremonial scenes to which allusion has been made—coronations, ecclesiastical and other processions, and even portraits and figure subjects of a formal or symbolic kind. In all such cases symmetry, or at least centralisation of the chief character or object, is legitimately in place because it will prove a Form that will evoke the Content of deference. And it would do so far more than would a Form of irregularity which might with equal ease be adopted by the artist and presented with equal claim to truth.

All this says a good word for artificiality, the concept of which in our minds should now be considerably enriched and enlarged. Artificiality is, as its name implies, a part of Art itself. It is opposed to naturalism, but not always antagonistically so. As we see it acting in the symmetry of works of art, we observe that it draws away from naturalism only to invest the subject portrayed with rare and ideal conditions which actual life would not furnish. We forget the world in looking at these works, and our minds are directed towards that side of our being where spirituality and poetry have place. To turn from one of these solemn, rich, impressive religious paintings to a scene of ordinary life, is to feel very distinctly the height to which our spirits were elevated.

Symmetry, then, is not denied to naturally planned pictures, for when the artist has need of that principle for what it will give him, he can easily avail himself of it and apply it to things as well as to persons.

In Constable's picture, "The Cenotaph," in the National Gallery, we are able to understand at once the charm of a very fine picture which the casual observer usually passes by as uninteresting. Here is a commemorative work wherein the



THE CENOTAPH  
CONSTABLE.





NORHAM CASTLE  
[FROM "LIBER STUDIORUM"]  
TURNER

## FORM AND CONTENT

central object is not a person but a monument, which Sir George Beaumont erected to the memory of Sir Joshua Reynolds. It is flanked by two stone pedestals surmounted by busts of Raphael and Michelangelo. These three objects, although they would have borne representation from any other point of view, are nevertheless disposed in a formal manner by Constable, in whose mind the principle I have advanced was evidently present. He did wisely, for he showed us unmistakably by this arrangement that he also was actuated by the commemorative idea which prompted Sir George Beaumont. Had Constable designed this picture in a more irregular manner he would have lost the help of symmetry, and there would have been nothing to show that he wished us to feel emotions of reverence, and "The Cenotaph" might have had no more psychological import than would a view of accidental stones.

Turner frequently placed a chief object in his pictures exactly in the centre for the same purpose of giving it importance. Often it was the sun himself. In "Norham Castle," one of the "Liber Studiorum" prints, the castle dominates all by being in this central position, giving at the same time a superlative glory to the sun by implication. For the sun is not actually seen; it is behind the castle, and therefore in the middle also, but its rays are as bright as the paper admits; so that in our imagination the unseen sun is brighter still, since the sun is brighter than its rays.

Should we find any work of art where an object treated with this dignity is not worthy of the honour, and evidently not meant to be of supreme importance, we may conclude that the composition is faulty. For the most part natural scenes have no such formality. That is why pictures are composed with their large masses at one side or the other. In landscape this is an accepted rule, the breaking of which requires the authority of genius. On this subject more remains to be said under the heading of Composition.

Let us now discuss another picture for the purpose of seeing how much the power of Form can endue the Literary Content with spiritual ideas in addition to the statements of material facts. "Der Tod als Freund" is a wood engraving of a drawing by Alfred Rethel, a German who died in the latter

part of the nineteenth century. It depicts Death as a friend. Like all German work it is strong in literary interest and human sentiment, and to these things its great and lasting popularity is due. But the technical excellence is likewise great, for it is hardly possible to imagine bolder, freer, more sensitive, or more resourceful methods in line work ; and this work stands as a classic for style.

The *Æsthetic Content* of the picture is derived from a Form wealthy in straight lines, and from this results at once its severity and its ascetic simplicity. The grace of a scheme of curves would be out of keeping, but strength and directness are appropriate. The design as a whole rests upon structural lines radiating from the sun, and the sun is placed at the spot which perspective here imposes as the "centre of vision." That in itself is an eloquent item in the Content due obviously to a deliberate choice in Form. The curve of the sun and that of the window opening are eccentrically related—a resource which avoids formal symmetry and introduces curvilinear radiation. In spite of a wealth of detail and small objects, in the true way of northern tradition, the engraving can boast a remarkable freedom from the fussiness and triviality one associates often with crowded incident in the work of past centuries. This defect is avoided perhaps by the broadening agency of the flood of light which unites all complexity of incident in one simple effect. All this is *æsthetic* and technical.

Let us follow out these formal characteristics and discover to what extent they heighten our enjoyment of the picture from the point of view of subject-matter alone. The story, briefly stated, is that an old belfry-man has died in harness seated among the ropes of his bells. His open Bible is on a table at his elbow, with the remains of a frugal meal. His keys hang at his girdle. His hands are clasped in prayer and his eyes are calmly closed. It would be possible to paint all this and tell the tale completely without raising in the spectator any further emotion than a recognition of the bare facts : an old man dead ! After all, old men do, and must, die. But *Rethel* is determined that the bare fact shall not be the end of it for us. He has thought, pondered, and schemed so that the relationship of one thing to another in the design shall pierce to deeper con-



DER TOD ALS FREUND  
RITHIL



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cepts than those of mere recognition. This is what Raphael also did in the *Ansidei Madonna* ; and it is the poetic quality of evoking further and yet further images from the depths of consciousness by certain relationships, which is really metaphor, that distinguishes great art from literalism.

In this picture of Death there is less of the terrifying supernatural and more of the comfortably human than usually occurs in allegories of this kind. Doubtless the artist wished to meet bereavement with consolation by showing Death's friendly action of carrying on the old man's duties. Death has come to him as a friend, and performs for him the last office of ringing the knell. This is a departure on Rethel's part from all the selfish and usually spiteful antics that Death performs in the several Dances of Death by Holbein and his imitators. Here the *macabre* is absent ; all is gentleness and peace. But the deeper Content is more subtle than this materialisation of Death which, after all, has something of the conceit and quip in it. We see the stairs up which the old man has daily climbed to reach his lofty solitude above the world in the purer air, nearer to the heaven of his simple faith. We see even more intentionally presented the continuation of those stairs winding yet higher to an open gallery ; unmistakable suggestion of the bell-ringer's aspirations above his daily round, and of the flying aloft of his liberated soul. And further emphasis is found in the pinnacles of which the tips are seen through both windows pointing upward.

Death's bearing is reverential ; the cruel blade of his scythe is hidden from sight. He is clad in the guise of a pilgrim. The scallop shell on his breast and on his hat, which hangs upon the chair (the German domestic intimate touch) is the badge of the wanderer ; and he carries the pilgrim's gourd. A bird with open throat carols its thanks to the departed benefactor who daily spread the crumbs along the ledge upon which it perches. The glow of the setting sun and the peace of the hour fall upon the faithful servant whose own day is likewise done. The scene seems to be one of transfiguration in preparation for the journey from this world. And this is the portent of the pilgrim symbolism which the figure of Death justly bears, but which could less rationally be borne by the old man himself.

## THE LURE OF THE FINE ARTS

Call all this allegory, or what we will, the point to remark is that it strengthens and enriches the picture. There could not be a better object-lesson of the happy balance of literary and æsthetic Content; of subject-matter and Art for Art's sake. Fine as is the design, the draughtsmanship, the characterisation, and accomplished as is the wood-engraving, these admitted technical excellences do not transcend in value the lofty motive of the invention.

Here is a case in which it is obvious that the term Beauty, if it is applied, finds qualification in something going on within ourselves. It would be possible to make alterations in this picture without affecting its æsthetic Content and yet subtracting the allegory and symbolism; for example, making Death a monk instead, and so forth. In such a condition it might lose the stimulus of each concept it now evokes, the response to which makes the picture beautiful in our eyes. I do not, of course, say that still another version on the same æsthetic basis of technicality could not evoke other concepts that would equally well make the perfect balance. But if that could be done it would still be Literary Content.

In the nineteenth century this aspect of pictures was popular and much called for, as indeed it always has been throughout the history of painting. But it began to be extraordinarily popular in the guise of legendary and humorous anecdote exemplified chiefly by the German painters; and certain critics in Paris thought that the *story* was getting ahead of the *painting* and that such a thing would prove bad for Art. As the leading *cognoscente*, Victor Hugo issued his famous "*L'art pour l'art*," and all the studios whence the less saleable kind of pictures emanated, rang with "Art for Art's Sake."

It is a fine high-sounding slogan, and to pronounce it is to range oneself on the side of the art-angels. Nevertheless, Hugo himself was the first to recant, calling with indignation for Art for humanity's sake. He was right; for humanity can only dwell in the literary Content, and pictures are for all men, not for æsthetes alone.

To a man like Whistler (1843-1903) "Art for Art's Sake" was a ready-made gospel. Encountered as he was in the first place by misprision, he gladly waved the banner of Art for

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Art's Sake and pushed its principles as far as they would go. Thus he established himself as the antithesis to Frith. Not content to wait until his fine and subtle vision which produced the Nocturnes had won their way with the greater public in spite of Ruskin's fulminations, Whistler endeavoured in everything to omit all that ordinarily would appeal readily to the great public. He renounced the use of all titles that were indications of definite people and places. He gave his works names like Nocturne, Symphony, Arrangement, Harmony. Even his portraits were "Arrangements," which could only mean logically that he wished them to be judged on technical artistic merits as pleasing pieces of painted canvas.

The most moving work from Whistler's hand was the portrait of his mother, which he first exhibited as an arrangement in black and grey, with no mention of any maternal relationship. This very fact must be taken as evidence of the strength of the man's convictions. He believed that Art was, in itself, so all-sufficient that even a filial emotion might prove an unsafe admixture.

When, however, one thinks of all the mothers that have been painted by their sons—and there are too many fine ones to mention here—it is remembered that probably in every other case it was a self-evident labour of love ; an act of filial devotion. As such the artists have invariably chosen a manner of presentment that is evidence of their wish to put emotion before virtuosity. They chose either a full or three-quarter face and usually a life-sized head ; and the most frequent result was a psychological study that placed the work among the painter's very best.

But an apostle of Art for Art's sake cannot be judged by the standards of psychological portraiture. Whistler did not ask as much. The title "Whistler's Mother" is a subsequent "happy thought" of the galleries and the critics.

The picture was a piece of *genre*, for which his mother obligingly sat as a model. No full or three-quarter face at life-size ; instead, a full-length, a profile, and much smaller than life. For a psychological portrait a profile offers the least fruitful aspect of the features—barring anything less than a profile. The eyes and the lips are consequently presented in a



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foreshortened way that precludes the possibility of showing any muscular play by which the sentiments are recorded in the face.

With these ascetic emotional restrictions there went also a desire to avoid the three-dimensional aims with which the painters of the day were occupied. The lady is close against a wall, in a position that nobody would take up in an ordinary dwelling-room. This secures a suggestion of two-dimensional flatness reminiscent of Japanese tradition.

It is all intentionally impersonal. Its tone is low and level—its colour “black and grey.” It is Art for Art’s Sake. Had it been painting for emotion’s sake we should have had a face glowing with the warmth of motherhood, its facial expression finding full scope in a more frontal view ; we should have had life, breadth, and colour ; light, and rotundity.

In a work that is done in single-mindedness for the sake of Art alone it is possible to enjoy its painting even when we recoil from the subject painted, as many do from Rembrandt’s “Butcher’s Shop,” to take an extreme example. For this reason the art-lover must become susceptible to Art’s own charms and influences before he can realise how essential they are to complete enjoyment of a work of art.

In a Rembrandt or a Corot—say, the oft-produced “Portrait of an Old Lady” and “The Bent Tree,” respectively—all the delights of Form : design, drawing, colour, tone, light and shade, modelling, even the putting-on of the paint (“handling”), make up an æsthetic appeal that has been potent with all who can appraise a picture, and this quite apart from the subject-matter of the works. Such is the genuine appeal of Art for Art’s Sake. Yet the pictures named represent a woman and a landscape nevertheless ; and it is because the Art for its own sake is so masterly that it is able to render all the homely pathos of womanhood, the charm of domesticity, the reverence to old age, and other concepts touched by the portrait ; and in the landscape, the poetry of effect, the fascination of woodland and water, the irresistible call of country life, and so forth. It does this in a way that touches the heart of those to whom Art, as Art, is a sealed book.

To be able thus to enjoy the Content of a work is, without

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doubt, a great inheritance from habits of observation, which beget strong attachments ; but it is not art appreciation in the strict sense. All the same charms could be suggested to a responsive mind by a very poor picture such as would be beneath the contempt of a true art-lover. This is why it becomes essential to separate Form from Content in order that the judgment is not confused and appreciation attributed to the wrong points.

Observation of Nature in all her aspects is necessary in order that the principles which underlie beauty may be apprehended ; then design, colour, shape, line, effect, and all the multifarious other factors in art-expression are no longer foreign to the mind ; they are seen and understood in all natural phenomena. The fortunate person who is thus able to trace in Nature the delights which he has perceived in Art will turn with greater expectancy to Art again for the enjoyment of further qualities yielded increasingly by Nature. The two aspects work and react mutually, each by virtue of the other, growing in value and mounting in esteem. Where this dual appreciation is well established there is little or no interest felt in virtuosity for its own sake. Mere cleverness and dexterity without feeling or inspiration will be judged as precisely what it is : an empty performance rising scarcely above the level of the old-fashioned penmanship that was practised in the days of our great-grandfathers, not by scholars but by writing-masters.

## CHAPTER V

### SOME ASPECTS OF FORM

THE type of person that has served our purpose while considering first impressions in a picture gallery will scarcely do as an objective for a book of this kind, unless it can be assumed that by further acquaintance with works of art he has become desirous of knowing something of their qualities, and wishes to be able to pass an opinion upon them by virtue of his personal judgment. And this, unfortunately, postulates something a little out of the common ; for the truth is that people are usually more anxious to be told, than to decide for themselves. A student of mine once asked point blank what he "ought to admire" and was thoroughly dissatisfied when it was explained to him that nobody could tell him such a thing without a gross abrogation of his own likes and dislikes.

That intention is the farthest possible from our present dissertations. Art that does not draw its sustenance from the convictions of the community which produces it, cannot properly develop at all ; it must of necessity become an alien thing of fads and fashions imposed by pedants and commercial agents. It is, therefore, in the hope of doing a little towards establishing a healthy and unsophisticated popular judgment, fearlessly and ingenuously expressed, that this book has been undertaken. For the author's firm conviction is that popular opinion, however opposed to "highbrow" estimation, is the only opinion that tells through the centuries. The few great things that really matter about the Fine Arts are those which can be found in all the supreme works of the past. They are elemental. They are matters of the relationships of humanity to Nature, and upon such truths every man has a right to pass a verdict. More than this is ephemeral. It is to be feared that under the absurd cloak of assumed conformity with authorita-

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tive opinions—which themselves are a series of consecutive contradictions—people unsuspectingly suppress their native and spontaneous judgments in the fear of being thought out of the ruts of current culture. Nothing worse can be imagined for Art's normal development ; and it is the public's willingness to suffer the abnormal that has resulted in the wave of degradation which is only now after many decades beginning to subside at some points.

It is certain that excellence in any of the arts can exert its influence upon the uninitiated as well as upon critics and experts. A well-designed and well-executed picture wins the approbation of all, even when the majority are entirely in the dark as to what constitutes charm. But there is yet a great difference between the enjoyment of the uninitiated and that of the expert. To see what is good, and to know why it is good, is a further enjoyment reserved for the *cognoscenti*—the knowing ones—who thus are able to take a conscious pleasure in recognition of the artist's power and skill unconsciously felt by the less instructed. On the other hand, a work that is badly conceived, badly put together, and badly carried out will cause the most ignorant to feel that it is wrong ; and this judgment seems to come intuitively, by the aid of no other standards than those of the deep-seated concepts of matters relating to Nature and Beauty such as were investigated in a previous chapter.

We shall make an attempt to bring these intuitive standards from the depths where they hide unrecognised, and place them in the light of reason and argument, so that they may be at hand for constant application in the appreciation of Form. But in doing this there is no need to enter thoroughly into the practical technique of works of art.

### SIZE AND SCALE

The first characteristic to impress itself upon a chance spectator entering a picture gallery was found to be size. Size is regulated by many considerations, some of them quite mundane, truly. One, fortunately less prevalent within the past fifty years, is that of using immense canvases for the sake of the importance their mere area can convey. Historical

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compositions and, worse still, portrait groups full of life-sized, or larger, figures seem to have been produced frequently for no other reason than that they might find their only possible resting place in some public hall or private palace where they would speak for their artist in heroic tones.

But the possibility of these advantages grows yearly smaller. Very large pictures are no longer in fashion, and the few that are occasionally produced have their justification in special commissions for the decoration of some public building interior. The aristocracy who were rich enough to be patrons of Art are now more anxious to sell the pictures they have than to buy new ones. The great houses that possessed picture galleries, and even the average mansions, are, by the agency of Death Duties, fast disintegrating into bungalows, of which the walls can only accommodate but a few tiny pictures. The "collector," once the mainstay of pictorial art in his regular visits to picture exhibitions, his pride in a personal judgment, and his growing collection, is a type now represented almost solely by the commercial magnate, remote and unseen—a type of infrequent recurrence whose personal enthusiasm does not make up for the loss of a more general habit of picture purchasing.

From these causes the painter has experienced some clipping of his wings. It is useless for him to emulate the spaciousness of Rubens and Veronese, for in these days of plebeian practicality even provincial galleries refuse to be interested in canvases that demand liberal wall-space. Does the reader ejaculate "and a good thing too!"? Well, there is much to be said for the large picture when it is also a good one. Any painter having a spark of self-confidence will tingle with a joyful and inspiriting anxiety at the thought of covering a space of noble measurements. It is a test: it gets the "last ounce" out of a resourceful artist. All fine painters have loved large work and, in the opulent days, all patrons too.

The chief drawback to large pictures is the difficulty of taking care of them. This means constant watchfulness and ready ministrations—precisely the things that publicly-owned masterpieces are likely to lack, because everybody's business—even when it is recognised—remains nobody's business. The

largest, sublimest, and most stupendous picture ever painted ; or, to quote Ruskin, " the most precious work of art of any kind whatsoever now existing in the world " is Tintoretto's " Paradise " in the Great Council Chamber of the Ducal Palace at Venice ; and it has become a magnificent ruin by reason of sheer neglect. Damp and dirt had corroded, stained, and darkened it to the degree of negligibility on the sightseers' part until 1909, when it was relined with canvas, though whether anything was done to clean it, re-nourish it or repair its surface, I am unable to say at the moment.

An immense picture is best painted on canvas because no base is more amenable to solicitous preservation. Fresco fades, panels crack and warp. But these risks are minimised in a small picture which can be effectively handled and cared for with little trouble. The work of moderate size that is movable fares better, therefore, than the less manageable thing, to disturb which entails labour, cost, and inconvenience.

Nevertheless, the big picture has the imposing quality of its bigness, and that is of more value than the unthinking would suppose. Any colossal work dominates one into a sort of respect. Even if it is unlovely, and still more when it is admirable, it gains if its subject-matter is suitable. The Colossus of Rhodes, that gigantic figure of Apollo that in a long-gone age (278 B.C.) stood at the harbour, was certainly imposing to the traveller or alien ; and it was doubtless with some such national pride that the Statue of Liberty was erected to impose a proper respect upon visitors to America.

Scale is the proportion between the size of an object as represented and its actual size ; but in pictorial representation the actual size of an object imposes no obligation upon the artist, as everybody knows. It is not generally understood, however, that a slight enlargement is often necessary in order to make things look their actual size. This principle is constantly applied in portraiture, especially when a position in a large and lofty chamber is a predestined resting-place for the work. And it is also a fact that when heads of figures are drawn just a little less than life-size they have a manikin look and are sometimes met with the term " farthing-face." We have to get well beneath life-size if we are to employ a small

scale ; and how small scarcely matters, provided proportion is right.

There was less concern for propriety as to scale in the works of the early masters, who frequently availed themselves of a symbolic convention that has existed from the earliest times and in all countries. This is the device of representing important figures at a large scale and unimportant ones—satellites, serfs, and others—at a small scale. As most people know, the recumbent effigies on tombs of the sixteenth century and thereabouts display rows of little effigies below, one behind the other, representing the children of the departed, the girls on one side and the boys on the other. They diminish in size in accordance with their ages. Earlier still, the votive pictures in churches showed the chief figure at a much larger size than the attendant angels. This is illustrated in the reproduction of Matteo's "Assumption of the Virgin."

In these days we look for an instinctive judgment in an artist which will impel him to adopt a satisfactory proportion not only in one object depicted but, to more important purpose, between the picture itself and the objects in it, both these respective sizes governing the position of the point at which the picture should be viewed. Further, the sense of scale is responsible for the *various* sizes of objects of the same kind in different parts of a picture ; and these variations depend upon an assumed view-point of the spectator when he is imagined as being upon the picture's ground and viewing the objects or figures as one of themselves. Thus, if near figures are much larger than distant figures the spectator is assumed to be nearer the near figures than he would be if all the figures were more equally sized.

In architecture mere size is very eloquent. Those who have not been fortunate enough to see the remains of those mighty Egyptian temples of which the columns were 70 feet high, can nevertheless feel from their pictured representations what a crushing sense of respectful awe their vastness effects. To go, on the other hand, into some provincial city where civic pride has raised a Town Hall or municipal buildings of small scale but ambitious design—there are several such—is to feel that one is in a magnificent doll's house or toy palace. It is for

these reasons that small works usually strike us as pretty, charming, exquisite ; but never as commanding or powerful.

The same amplitude that brings response in colossal works will be proportionately felt in work of any size. But if the work be very small there is scarcely room enough for even the relative amplitude to affect us physically (for the influence is physical in its nature). In colour also, and tone, areas that are extremely small cannot impress us with those feelings of breadth, equableness, and opulence that are evoked in works of larger proportions. We are physically too large for them. If we were of the size of ants we could no doubt get the full effect of amplitude from the areas of a postage stamp.

The sense of scale is an artistic instinct by no means common. One often sees book illustrations, and more often "book-plates," (those ownership labels which for the sake of convenience are loosely called "Ex Libris"), of which the scale is so large that at the distance of the eye from the letterpress, adjusted for comfortable reading, the design and the style of work appear monstrous, as would a small piece cut out from some large design intended to be seen upon a wall. The finest taste in the scale of book-embellishment prevailed perhaps in the eighteenth century ; but the "vignettes" of small scale and fine execution upon the title-pages of early nineteenth-century books were well fitted for their purpose, because they were viewed at the reader's convenient eye-distance. Drawings of this scale are likewise best enjoyed in the hand or upon an easel. Portraits in miniature are intended to be seen when held in the hand : their fitting place is not upon a wall of a large room. A small picture suffers by the normal scale of its surroundings, and can only gain impressiveness by a concentrated vision that shuts out everything around it. This, perhaps, all pictures that are not mere "decorations" equally require, but for the very small one in a gallery an obvious effort is involved. The very large picture is perhaps even more difficult to see properly. Usually the spectator has not space enough to get back to the proper viewpoint from which he can adequately consider the work as a whole. If it should happen that a small scale has been chosen for the figures the spectator is tempted to go close to see the details, and then he loses the general effect.



## TONE

The next characteristic noted by our gallery visitor was said to be general tone. The term Tone in ordinary parlance is a bad case of word-overwork. It has to bear a great number of meanings, musical and pathological besides artistic. In art matters the word is one of the very few that have been borrowed from Music. Even in Art it is quite loosely used to denote sometimes the general tint or hue of a thing, at other times a quality of colour, as a "rich tone" of gold. Tone, as the term is here used, means a degree of lightness or darkness of anything, its colour contributing.

The darkness of a picture depends upon more than one set of circumstances. Obviously it may be due to mere dirt or to chemically blackening of pigments badly chosen and ignorantly used. But we will suppose the normal conditions. Everybody knows that shadow must be represented by darkness and illumination by lightness. A picture, therefore, that presents the larger part of its area as depicting things in shadow will necessarily be low in scale of tone.

Here is another confusion of terms. Scale has already been discussed as an aspect of size. Now we must admit one of its numerous other meanings, that of a graduation. The term will serve admirably in the sense that is given it in Music; and that art also lends another word to art criticism, namely, Key.

Proper tonal relation may very conveniently be explained by this comparison in Music. One knows that a tune can be sung in any key; but it is not everybody who can distinguish one key from another, though the ear for melody may be keen enough. This shows that as far as the tune itself is concerned the key does not matter at all unless more than one executant is concerned, when of course there must be entire agreement in every respect. The tune is formed by a succession of notes taken from various parts of the scale. (It depends on "rhythm" also, but that is not necessary to the argument.) The "highness" or "lowness" of notes in the musical scale may be said to tally with the lightness or darkness of spots in the graphic scale.

If the notes from the musical scale are not at the proper intervals from each other the tune will be incorrect. Similarly the message or statement of a picture—its tune—will be incorrect if the notes of tone from the dark to the light end of the scale are not each at its proper interval from the others. So long as this relationship of notes and tones is strictly kept, the key may be either high or low ; for in any case the tune or statement will be recognised and enjoyed because it is correct in its intervals.

There is only one point in which this analogy between Painting and Music does not quite hold good. The musical scale in vogue to-day is made up of intervals (semitones) of the same length : there is always the same distance between the tonic extremes of the octave ; *i.e.*, between any two Dohs ; but in Painting this constancy does not exist. The steps between lights and darks may be longer or shorter and yet give the recognisable message ; but in Music to alter the length of the intervals would be to give a different tune. Thus we say that in Painting the scale may be elongated or compressed ; though in Music it is unalterable. A moment's thought will show the reasonableness, the inevitability, of this. In Nature we have the sun. Can any painter match the luminosity of the sun ? No ! well then, *actuality* of tone as a working proposition falls to the ground at once ; but we can also go to the other extreme of the scale. A piece of black velvet that has no strong light upon it and seen indoors is about as black a thing as one can get, because down between the standing threads of the pile there is the very minimum of direct and reflected light. It is much darker than the opening of a dark cave, because there we have the diffuse light in the atmosphere coming in the way, and forming a film between our eyes and the absolute blackness of the cave. In the velvet we are closer to the blackness and the atmospheric film is reduced to a minimum, perhaps, in a measure, by the comparative dryness of indoor air. The pile is close enough to prevent any light striking into the fabric. Each thread of pile shades the next. The standing threads do not reflect any light black to our eyes, partly because they have little to reflect, and partly because they are not at the right "angle of incidence" to do so. Plush can do so because

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its threads are bent over and present "broadside" volleys of reflected light to the eye. The reason why the blackness of velvet is impossible with paint is that the paint also presents broadsides of reflected light which falsify the blackness of its true tint, making it look less black than it is. Painting therefore can no more give absence of light than it can give the light of sunshine.

The full scale of tones runs, of course, from black to white, but every picture does not run the whole scale. It would be possible to find examples of graphic art in which a light, even a sunny, subject was depicted in a lower key of tone than another which represented a shadowy scene. This apparent anomaly presents no difficulty. It is largely due to the medium in which the artist works. A silver-point drawing cannot be dark in any conditions; and many black-lead point drawings resemble them. A dark, overprinted photograph will be low in tone; but if it fades it gets gradually lighter and lighter, yet it goes on telling its tale of shadows quite appreciably until the last vestige of tone fades away. This proves that the presented particulars of the subject do not really rely upon the actual tone they would have in Nature. It shows that the particulars of the subject can be rendered in any key of tone and in any tint of monotone. Many varieties of tint are used for photographs, as well as for engravings and etchings: brown, black, green, and red—the famous Bartalozzi red being an established canon in taste.

This may seem all very free from fixed rules, and capable of licence to any degree. But there is a rule, however, and it is so difficult that painters continually go wrong about it and produce bad pictures because they cannot or will not bother to fulfil their obligations to this rule. The matter may be summed up thus. There is no rule about the *key* of tone chosen for a work of art: it may be high or low; but the inexorable law is that in the particular key chosen the relation of tones one to another must be properly kept. It is on this rock that whole fleets of works of art split. For not only must relative tone be correct; but each key of general tone has its own necessities of relativity in the particular tones it comprises. Only in this way will a picture "look right" in

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whatever key it is given, without any agreement with the measurable tones of Nature.

When the painting scale is compressed we get in the picture short intervals between shades of tone and less difference between the highest light and the deepest shade. When the scale is elongated we get reverse conditions. In a work where the highest light is white and the deepest shade black the artist has used the longest possible scale. The choice of either a long or short scale of tone depends largely upon the medium in which the artist is to work. In painting he can do anything, but in lithography for example, or in drawing for process-engraving, he must remember that his high-light cannot be lighter than paper and his lowest tone darker than the colour of the printer's ink, usually and preferably, but not invariably, black.

### LIGHT AND SHADE

In life we apprehend the solidity of things by the light that falls upon them, and by the shaded parts that the light reaches partly or not at all. The absence or part absence of light are phenomena by which we form ideas of the three-dimensional shape of objects. A so-called square box (of course, a cube box) presents three of its sides to the eye, and each will vary in strength of tone. But look at an orange. There are not three tones in that, but three millions, gradually merging one into the other. This gradation of shade or of light, whichever we may call it, is a beauty in itself. It is that which constitutes the fascination of those peerless little treasures of art, the antique engraved gems, which may be seen in the British Museum. It is the charm which has inspired the finest Italian coins and medals and bas-reliefs of all times.

Light and shade seems, like colour, to have been a late development in the graphic arts. Primitive and prehistoric attempts point to the fact that in earlier ages people saw far less than we do in the things they looked at. Vision seems to have been little more than a notification of objects already explored by the other senses; and the tactile sense was probably the most active in man. This fact would seem to be recognised in the lament of Plato, given in the Appendix,

where he accuses painters and draughtsmen of being rogues and charlatans because they cannot represent bedsteads in their true measurements but have to resort to the illusions of perspective. We know that our own children try to draw things as they believe them cubically to be, and not as the eye sees them ; and examples of prehistoric painting, besides all primitive work of historic times, show obvious efforts to give the mass and structure of things, not as the eye sees them, but as the delineator *knows them to be*. These archaisms are a kind of memory painting, into which light and shade does not come, because observation has never been concerned with it, whereas bulk, shape, general or "local" colour, and a few important details have been noted by repeated experience of size, weight, and texture. I would go as far as to say that the Attic sculpture was more an homage to tactile sense than to visual. It certainly involved much measurement, as we know, and its beauties are those of proportion and contour, and grace of mass. It does not seem to have relied primarily for its charms upon the appearance it would have made as a system of light and shade ; though perhaps the silhouette was a matter of some solicitude. The mere fact that the pediment of the Parthenon was a painted affair—and painted in two or three flat colours for no other reason than to "pick out" the forms, rather stultifies the idea of a delicate enjoyment of *nuances* of light and shade ; for their relative gradations would best be seen in a monochrome presentment. The heavy cast shadows resulting from sunshine were perhaps regarded as an inevitable misfortune, and mitigated to some extent by the colour relief of figures against background.

This theory that Athenian sculpture owes its incentive to a tactile pleasure, would seem on the surface to be incompatible with that of the origination of Beauty in vision. But there is no incompatibility. In the first place, the theories of Art are not the theories of Beauty, as I have earlier submitted : the only connection between them is one of impulse. Next, the Beauty Sense cannot be regarded as something existing full-fledged from time immemorial. It has to grow by what it feeds on, and it is generated in sensory pleasure. We can easily grant a sensory pleasure in the flinging of a stone or the

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playing of "ducks and drakes" with an oyster shell on a pond, both of which are likely to have been fascinating diversions of primordial man, although he would have failed to recognise Beauty in the fun. We may grant, on the reasoning of Empathy, a growing apprehension of line and shape characteristics which might raise the man's enjoyment to a higher plane in the mind.

Beauty perception cannot be other than a matter of mental culture and enthusiasm in spite of its sensory origin. When the primrose by the river's brim is "nothing more" the subject has possibly lost by apathy even the instinctive delight that a bee has for flowers. We are unable to estimate how far the instincts of the lower orders of creation are concerned with and maintained by sensory pleasure; but it seems beyond doubt that flowers attract mankind, though mankind has no share in a biological contract. There is that difference between a bee and a Bunthorne.

If, then, the Beauty Sense is an evolutionary process rather than an endowment, it is not necessary to believe that the sculptures of Phidias are different *in kind* from those of the archaic Apollos and Athenes, or the Easter Island effigies outside the British Museum, or the snow men of our children. The difference is one of degree. What the child does the savage does. They both create their effigies from their concepts of a man; they do not take one as a model and study his parts. More frequent and concentrated observation for definite ends, however, brings about ever-increasing improvements as shape is better apprehended. Legs are thinned over the feet instead of appearing as pillars; a head becomes less spherical and is noticed eventually to be a cranium and a face. In this way sculpture develops, but there is as yet no Beauty felt in it. If there were, the archaic sculptures would not be such ugly things. The development has been entirely one of shape appreciation by judgment of proportion of parts. Measurement has been merely visual, doubtless, but only because the actual measurement stage has not yet been reached. The sculpture grows in grace by knowledge of those of its qualities that are in the domain of the sense of touch. It is an air-displacement problem, three-dimensional, until the stage

is reached when the limbs are separated and put into action. Then the sculptor begins to endue his work with really human characteristics. But even now he may not be seeking Beauty for its own sake, but striving only to imitate for the purposes of worship and superstition. The Parthenon Athene seems to indicate this state of things. She is quaint rather than beautiful, being indeed, a copy of what was an "antique" even in the days of Phidias (450 B.C.). The Æginetan sculptures represent the stage at which the Beauty Sense, arriving by way of vision, has somewhat humanised the effigy-solidity sense. Bodies are now naturalistically active but faces are still masks. In the Parthenon pediments the Beauty Sense has grown to full force.

Having achieved perfection of form, idealised by a generalisation of references to living types, Attic sculpture yet lacks any evidence to suggest that the light and shade to which it would be subject was considered as a manifestation of Beauty; though, of course, it must have been the only manifestation of form (when once the sculptures were out of reach), except relief from the background. For the Greek, Beauty, ample as it was, lay in cubic contents and proportion, in planes and contours. Sculpture that aims at light and shade as an end is of modern origin. The antique engraved gems have abundant charm of tone gradation—more for our eyes perhaps than for those of the Ancients; for the gems were matrices intended to produce reliefs in wax or paste, and such results would be judged by prevailing standards of cubic form.

The absence of any recognition of vigorous light and shade in primitive painting points to the same hypothesis: that the beginners in art must have thought that shadows would spoil the tactile representation of local colour. We remember the objections Queen Elizabeth raised to shadows in her portrait on the ground that her complexion showed no such smudges (I think it was Queen Elizabeth—but she will do).

It was the unfortunate Caravaggio (1569–1609) who first astonished the world by exhibiting pictures that were the very extremes of light and shade. With more force of adventure but with less grace and restraint than Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), by whom the charm and mystery of shade had already

been exploited, as one might say, Caravaggio pushed the resources of shadows to their utmost, and thus made an impression on painting deep enough to last through all succeeding eras. It is indeed one of the secrets of the "grand style" or "grand gusto" and the chief aspect, popularly recognised, of the general notion of what an "old master" should be. After Caravaggio, painting finally emerged from the flatness of effect of the primitives wherever that fault had still lingered.

In the few paintings by Leonardo that exist one is struck by a romantic kind of gloom, out of which faces and hands gleam with an eerie light, the source of which is not easily found. It is a gloom that creeps over forms, surrendering to light only by degrees through half-tones much attenuated. This extreme softening adds an evanescence to the forms—a quality which the Italians called *lo sfumato*. Correggio (1494–1534) likewise and by similar resources secured roundness and relief in subtleties of shadow, preserving shape, whilst softening contours. The hard edges or outlines of things which are the characteristics of primitive painting were thus deliberately lost and the romance of lighting given preference over shape, contour and silhouette.

In recent years one of the puerilities of "modernistic" work has been a return to the days of immature artistic vision. Cast shadows have been carefully omitted in representations of objects in sunlight. Nobody knows exactly why. I think myself it was a confession of failure to do better than had been done, and a *pis aller* in deliberately adopting an archaism for what it would prove to be worth. Sometimes a sort of argument has been found in an imitation of Indian or other foreign and primitive work having no traditions of naturalism. All attempts to cross Occidental with Oriental art have so far resulted in very sorry mules.

In painting, the attenuation of light as the rays lose foothold over surfaces which fall away from the plane at right-angles to the rays, is what we love because it is an intuitive perception. It is tone-sweetness, tone-smoothness: and whatever may be said against sweetness and smoothness in themselves, they have their place in our concepts of Beauty because



they have place in Nature. When combined with abruptness, the sharp stoppage of gradation against an edge of light or dark, their sweetness gains its proper worth and significance. The sculptor knows all these secret charms. They constitute the delights of modelling. They are as necessary to him as are the principles of composition.

Light and shade, then, is beautiful chiefly because of its gradation and contrast; and by these two principles it expresses not only the shape of things, but the beauty of the shape. We must not, therefore, think of light and shade as the mere casting of shadow—that is subtle enough—but as the modelling of a head, a hand, or a torso; a flower, a mountain, or a gem; wherein the beauties of surface, the *planes*, as sculptors use the term, are a delight that increases as they are felt and understood.

In sculpture such charms of modelling can present themselves uncompromised by colour and texture; but in painting the artist learns to judge them as they work in consonance with colour and texture. He will observe that there is something wrong if the colour is out of the tonal key; if the whole coloured shape, including all its *nuances* of modelling, does not present that easily apprehended idea of material form that sculpture so immediately achieves. It was with this idea in mind that the sound old art-masters used to tell their pupils to think of a turnip when painting a head. The head was to be a round thing—a coloured one, if you like, but first of all round. This appearance of roundness is easily disturbed by faults in the tone-value of colour; as when a deep tint in the light is made to look like a part in shade; or a bright tint in the shade “jumps out” of its due obscurity. A work with such faults is said to be out of keeping.

#### CHIAROSCURO

The colour of shadows in works of modern times is often enough extremely high in tone at all points; for many recent painters have emphasised the brightness of the colour that lurks in shadows, and they have in some instances shown a tendency to exaggerate the effect of reflected light in the shadowed side of things, with the result that tone as an aid in

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picture designing has in such cases been lost sight of. Works of this class could not be said to be strong in *chiaroscuro* (Ital. : *chiaro*, light, clear ; and *oscuro*, dark), and this fact would prove that *chiaroscuro* means something more than mere light and shade. The term denotes the effect of contrast between darkness or paleness of tone from any cause intentional on the part of the artist. Old authorities went as far as saying that warmth and coolness of colour were elements in a complete scheme of *chiaroscuro*.

This relief of dark against light was a further fact noted by our gallery visitor. It is, of course, a result of tone contrasts, and operates both in *chiaroscuro* and in composition ; for if the artist intended that his design should take some general pattern of light against dark, he will have *composed* it to that end. He will have swept the light parts and the dark parts into distinct masses and, of course, those masses would be of some shape or other ; not the proper shape of the things represented, but that of the combination of several objects.

If we were to see statuary in deep shade standing before a light background, we should judge it purely by the pleasure we received from the lines and masses revealed by its dark shape. It is the same with pictures. There are ugly shapes and beautiful shapes : shapes that convey some motive and others that are meaningless. We receive delight not only from those which seem to rest upon the principles of beautiful form : as the sweeping line, radiation, balance of masses, proportion, spring and growth of curves, but also upon the alternation of relief of one against the other. This may be at times of the subtlest and most delicate kind, for all degrees of contrast and gradation between extremes are necessary to a complete result of satisfactory *chiaroscuro*.

Accordingly as these principles are manifested do we agree that the work shows good design in composition.

We have already seen how Colour may manifest itself as Tone ; and the reader in visiting a gallery will be struck with many examples wherein the general pattern, or large silhouette,\*

\* Silhouette, the name given to the portrait cut out of black paper with the scissors, after the French Minister of Finance of that name, who was said to advocate niggardly policy. The term is now used for the general shape of any form when seen as a dark mass against the light.

is due to the relative disposition of masses and colour. The masses tell more prominently by their outline than by the roundness and modelling of the parts within the outlines, and a flatness results which emphasises the pattern as a silhouette. This the painter of old turned to the advantage of the decorative purport of his work. It was no doubt a further inducement to symmetry of design. The Italian altar-pieces afford many striking examples, of which the Raphael illustration is one; but pictures that are unsymmetrical in plan give the painter equal opportunity. Our illustration of "The Mill," otherwise known latterly as "The Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca," by Claude (1600-1682), shows a grandly designed silhouette.

It will readily be understood that if a correct relationship is necessary in works of monochrome—that is to say, in drawings, etchings, and engravings that are all in one tint—the tone-values must be just as properly preserved in works that are in colours. This, in fact, is far more difficult, because colours have tone-values of their own which have to be allowed for. Compare, for example, differing tone strengths of primrose-yellow and chocolate-brown. But, as is always the case, what are difficulties to the beginner or the inexpert prove added resources to the master, and therefore the tones of pigments are often chosen by the artist for the help they give to his meaning or motive in adopting a lighter or a darker key.

It would be possible, therefore, for a spectator in a gallery to see a work low in tone that was not necessarily a picture of deeply-shadowed things. It might be the representation of a diffused lighting on objects the local colours of which happened to be of deep tone in nature—wooded tracts of country, dark clouds, blue hills, black rocks and crags; or figures with deep-coloured clothing. The visitor could find many such examples in the National Gallery. In Raphael's "Ansidei Madonna," the rich garments are in all cases of deep-toned colour, although, as our illustration shows, they are so disposed as to catch the same illumination as falls upon the faces and the white mitre.

The fact that in the picture the garments do not in reality

catch such light, is a matter which must be dealt with. Even a smattering of art history is an advantage when passing opinion upon works of art. We may see that the colour and tone-values in the works of old are wrong, but we need not let that fact disturb our enjoyment of them.

The apprehension of tone-values in relation to colour-contrasts is a particular development of painting in more recent times. The old masters did not concern themselves with this aspect of naturalism, even if they were alive to it, which, in the modern sense, they were not. Were we to see a similar disregard or ignorance in a modern work, especially if it made claims to naturalism, we should legitimately register the fault in our minds to the painter's discredit.

There is another way, however, in which this matter must be considered. Many a well-intentioned modern painter gives himself so much concern about roundness and relief, solidity and modelling, all of which he secures by lively realism in light and shade, that he overlooks the even more subtle truth of tonality which lurks in colour-values. A brightly illumined linen collar will have its high light at a very much higher pitch than the similarly lit face above it, because the general tone of flesh is lower than the general tone of a white linen collar. But it is not unusual to see in works by incapable artists a disregard of these colour-values, resulting in an all-over scheme of brightness and shadows rather as though the object were a statue without colour. In black-and-white illustration this equal treatment of a light and shade scheme for all things is not only legitimate but technically advantageous; but in coloured works it is, of course, technically wrong.

In pictures by painters who lived before the age of modern developments, other ideals are evident, and from the point of view of abstract Beauty they are no less worthy of admiration. The early Italians may not have achieved the truths that later research in Art has given to the world; but they are equally rich in certain principles of Beauty due to truth seen from another standpoint. Their method of rendering objects with a comparative immaturity of representation unquestionably carries with it certain charms of simple tonality and serenity of colour. Our resentment against want of roundness, failure

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of three-dimensional conviction, and faulty realism in light and shade is only felt in the works of moderns who, notwithstanding the developments of their day, are either unable to encompass the naturalism they claim to adopt, or have set their faces against it deliberately.

### DESIGN

The term design covers a wide range. It includes the first hazy notion in the artist's mind, the dramatic portrayal of incident, the psychological portent of the whole, its harmoniousness with the surroundings for which it is destined, even the style of frame or other setting. Composition is a part of design. Since the term means *placing together* it should properly only be used for the structural parts of a work such as lines, masses, and shapes, in their mutual relationships.

In the work of past centuries and in modern paintings also, we find the great division of ideas in picture-planning—the broad and simple classification of symmetrical and unsymmetrical design—which has already been considered from the point of view of subject-matter.

### THE DECORATIVE IDEA

It must not be forgotten that the function of religious and allegorical painting has always been very largely decorative as well as devotional. The embellishment of the building for which such works were destined would be an ever-present consideration with the artist. The idea of a decorative function in the work involves thought of law and order. From the earliest times such thought has been associated with a kind of geometrical arrangement of parts. We saw that the primitive mind adopts instinctively this idea of geometrical order when it occupies itself with Art applied to any kind of formal or ceremonious end; but when the end is mere representation in imitation of Nature, then formal regularity is not resorted to. This the prehistoric cave-paintings bear out, as do also a child's drawings of the things it sees in Nature. Thus the recognition of the two methods, imitative and decorative, is established in earliest efforts towards artistic expression.

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The child who adopts a geometrical formality in playing with pebbles, does so with the decorative idea uppermost, thus proving the close association that exists between decoration and veneration. The thing that is venerated is the thing that exacts formal ceremony and embellishment.

But as the practice of the Fine Arts advances the primitive conception of symmetrical formality gives way before the artist's control over Form; and this control engenders a desire to express a Content above that of mere deferential adornment. In the decoration of buildings and of articles of use by the plastic arts, the adornment idea is still uppermost, but it is bent to the representation of natural objects such as floral forms and living creatures. These representations set up a literary Content which is frequently given an allegorical meaning. But in the graphic arts the idea of adornment sinks below the purely pictorial idea. A picture cannot be anything but completely a picture; and if it is used as an embellishment in the form of panels upon furniture or of enamelling on objects of utility, it can still only be really enjoyed *for its own sake* as a picture. It adds nothing to the beauty of its support in the way of contour and colour, because it is on a flat surface and its tints have not necessarily any relation to other things outside its own limits. And this applies no less to mural pictures.

The only way in which pictorial work can reflect any glory upon edifices they are supposed to adorn is for them to be to some extent formal and symmetrical in design; for by this means their literary interest surrenders much of its realism and the spectator rightly fills the void with ideas outside the picture story; that is to say, he has the more regard for the building itself, and that first by way of the portion of the structure which the picture may have been designed to fit: the frieze, the dome, the lunette or the panel.

When a picture that is not associated with a building essays to give a veneration Content very forcibly, the formal design becomes largely necessary, as we have seen in the examples by Matteo, Raphael, and Constable. In such works the departures from a strictly formal scheme coincide with, and are the measure of, the degree of pictorial Content desired by the

artist. In Constable's "Cenotaph" the important incident of the stag all but upsets the symmetry of the design and thus secures a realistic Content proper to a landscape depicting a woodland scene. The same interruption of strict formality is observed in Matteo's "Assumption." There the figure of St. Thomas receiving the dropping Girdle is introduced as a narrative episode, and symmetry is at that part relinquished.

At this point the reader may happen to think of Japanese art and conclude that the above argument is unsound, inasmuch as Japanese art is admitted to be the most obviously and subtly decorative of all, and yet it is the very opposite of formal and geometrical. The case is explained in this way. The Japanese are decorative instinctively. The impulse seems to be in their blood. They borrowed their art at a rather advanced stage from the Chinese, and they appear to have accepted it and developed it as a means of expressing their innate love of beautifying things of daily use with the representation of natural things they venerate. The formal and geometrical stage of this borrowed art had been passed through before their civilisation adopted it. All that remained of it survived in the "frets," "diaper patterns," and "keyborders" bequeathed by the Chinese. In the motives used by the Japanese—their birds, fishes, blossoms, etc.—naturalism is paramount and could scarcely go further. Indeed in certain ways, such as the seizing of motion, it has not in its own manner been surpassed. To use such motives, evolved with the quintessence of naturalism, on a symmetrical plan would be an error of which the Japanese would be incapable. Their artists take their intensely naturalistic motives and throw them lightly, but with unerring taste, upon screens, fans, textiles, and so forth, in a way which argues the utmost refinement of the decorative sense imbibed from Nature herself, and not the outcome of subconscious sophistication, such as the child's pebbles imply. In their painting, textiles, and lacquer work they could no more adopt the primitive or childish idea of decoration than could a primitive of any country adopt their unsymmetrical schemes of design. They seem to have skipped that stage of evolution which in Europe took place through the medium of religious art, and to have come at

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once to that ultimate development of the decorative sense which avoids symmetry.

This more untrammelled sense European art has felt and worked by from the earliest times in its naturalistic painting, and it is to the leading principles of that non-symmetric method that our enquiries are chiefly directed.

The confusion that has been made between decorative and realistic art will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter.

### COMPOSITION

Art handbooks and other methods of art instruction frequently lead the student to suppose that pictures are built up upon a kind of scaffolding, the favourite form of which, according to the authorities of former decades, was the pyramid. It is to be doubted, nevertheless, whether any painter actually set out to produce a picture by first deliberately adopting a triangle, a semicircle, or any other geometrical device as a groundwork and then fitting his incidents on to it. In mural decoration, where the design of the work has to conform to lines and shapes already existing in the building which the painting is to adorn, this previous scaffolding may or may not be an advisable preliminary ; but in ordinary work standing by itself, whether it is designed in the studio or adapted from Nature in the open, the usual method is for the painter to see, or to think of, his main incident, and to place this at once upon the canvas. It must be evident that what is next put beside it must either minister to or detract from its interest and importance. Which of these two results is likely to ensue, consistent with the beauty of the complete scheme, is the prime consideration in pictorial Composition.

Pictorial Composition demands that the *putting together* shall be done to some purpose, and especially with an idea of beauty of form. One could not say that a handful of beans dropped upon a table were put together : they would simply have come together, although in doing so they would have obeyed certain natural laws. It might happen that the beans, lying as they had dropped, were very agreeably disposed. Natural forces usually achieve fine schemes of design. But in dealing with the objects in a landscape, and still more with



figures in a studio, we have factors in which the human element might be expected to disturb the natural result of physical forces. If the beans had fallen so that no relationship between each other was set up, they would have no significance as a group ; but if they were re-arranged so that they formed some order, then as a group they would mean something more than they meant as unrelated beans.

The artist puts his incidents together with two distinct purposes in mind. The one is that the shapes that come about by his combination of things shall be shapes that are agreeable to the eye and shall have some sort of relation to each other. The other purpose is that all the lines, the masses, and the shapes occurring in a picture shall in themselves assist in conveying the Content ; or in other words shall help the expressiveness of the chief incident which the artist has already placed upon his canvas.

It is obvious that incidents could be arranged in lines which would seem to lead the eye to the chief object of interest. Such lines may be secured by the slope of hills, by the distribution of clouds, by the contours of masses of foliage and so on. It is in this manner that *composing lines* are referred to in the phraseology of Art.

But let us be sure of the meaning of the word " lines " in this connection. The conventional line such as we see in diagrams is well known ; but the composing lines of a picture are not of this kind. They are no more than an arrangement of parts or incidents suggesting direction, as when we speak of a *line* of cabs. It is not necessary either that such a line of incidents should be uniform and continuous. It can break, have lapses, and be composed of things of any size : it can be at times more a suggestion than a realisation, but the eye must be able to feel its flow. The " Christ Appearing to Mary Magdalene " by Titian (1477-1576) in the National Gallery is an example of objects arranged to form an organic line. The tree can have been drawn as it is for no other reason. The harmony of the curves may be noted in the ovate form made by the lower part of the tree trunk and the standing figure. A line of much significance is given by the continuity of the two arms which almost meet. It is a kind of



CHRIST APPEARING TO MARY MAGDALEN  
[KNOWN AS "NOLI ME TANGERE"]  
TITIAN



linking of the figures into one entity. This picture well exemplifies at this point the reliance of Content upon Form. The two figures make a crescent-shaped mass : they are not antagonistically placed. In this way the painter has expressed Christ's charitable leaning towards the fallen in contradistinction to the opinion of the Pharisees.

It is more likely than not that the many different incidents of a picture would give a scattered appearance to a work unless disposed in such a way as to comprise a definite scheme. What the scheme is matters but little so long as it is organic, and helps the message the artist has to communicate, by relating and combining the various items. From this sophisticated arrangement of the parts of a picture there results what is spoken of as *pattern*. Of course a pattern may be made up of separate spots arranged geometrically (the ordinary idea of a pattern such as one sees on textile fabrics). Obviously this would be no help to a naturalistic presentment, to say nothing of the fact that detached spots have an all-overish effect which is weak, whereas combined into one or two masses connected by the suggested line, of which mention has been made, they may result in the appearance of strength : the strength of accumulation as opposed to the weakness of dispersion.

Such masses would balance automatically in a symmetrical design ; but in a naturally irregular design they would not, because, as we have seen, the chief mass is not in the centre in an irregular design, but at the side. The mind, nevertheless, does seem to expect something at the opposite side to compensate for the weight of the chief mass, and there are ways of securing this compensation, without which an irregular design might appear, after all, to be one-sided. A smaller mass may be placed in such an opposing situation as would enable it to appear to weigh the same as the chief mass. Or it may be darker and more concentrated than a large mass that is lighter and more diffuse, and thus restore balance by gaining in force what it lacked in size. Again, in landscape, the near large thing is naturally balanced by the distant far and therefore smaller thing.

To sum the matter up, a well-composed picture should not have a scattered nondescript arrangement of its parts ; there-

fore the parts should be combined into some relation with each other, and result in some kind of shape-motive. That motive may indeed be pyramidal in shape : it is quite as often a fine curved sweep. It really matters little what the shape-motive is so long as it is an admirable one and knits the whole composition into a single idea of design, an entity. If the arrangement, besides being good in itself, is also a help to the Content by reason of its leading lines, its relief of lights and darks, its solid support of the chief incident rather than detraction from it, then the composition is doubly successful.

Something of the qualities of straight lines has already been discussed : that verticals evoke ideas of dignity and aspiration ; that horizontals speak of repose and stability ; that diagonals communicate ideas of action. All these have structural significance. Combined with the curve the straight line is a most valuable element in design, and in the works of the old masters the combination is always very appreciably adopted. The grand compositions of Veronese owe much of their impressiveness to columns and other architectural features of strength and grace ; "The Vision of Saint Helena" being a case in point. Michelangelo (1475-1564) made constant use of the same combination both in sculpture and painting.

The grouping of figures, of trees, of houses, of any items in fact that so lend themselves, demands consideration of the shape that will result. This is a factor having the more free play in figures because of their independence of the stable facts of topography and construction. In the best works the principles of line and mass-shape are not injuriously affected by the introduction of figures or animals. On the contrary, the mobility of such accessories offers valuable resources for the necessary combination of all into a harmonious scheme.

Nevertheless, we frequently find pictures in which all the different incidents present a complicated and restless appearance. In such conditions the eye seems unable to rest at any spot, being drawn hither and thither to the subservient items of the subject. Such complexity of interest is a fault because it embarrasses. It may arise from various causes ; from mere dispersion of items, from spotty and discordant colour, and

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from a want of concentration of tone. The most elaborate composition should, in its complete result, have a look of singleness of purpose. There may, of course, be rare occasions in which it was the artist's intention to create a mood of turmoil, but even then the picture should not sacrifice beauty.

Simplicity is usually safeguarded by care and design to provide relief in spacing, by calculated treatment of light and shade, and by the massing of tone and colour.

Another resource for the securing of simplicity in design is offered by a massed treatment of light and shade. If the foreground with its objects is in a broad shadow, the more distant parts will advantageously combine in a simple flood of light. If, on the other hand, shade veils the background or the mountains and middle-distant country, the foreground stands out in a clear statement of illuminations. Thus the *chiaroscuro* is not permitted to be distributed in small opposing quantities everywhere, but practically in two simple masses.

Restraint is one of the rarest qualities in artistic expression and stands in direct contrast to barbaric and vulgar lavishness, which may be said to be a disproportionate submission to a single idea ; as when a person is loaded with jewellery in the mistaken notion that the more of adornment is displayed the more admirable will be the result. The true artist knows when to stop.

The alternation of repose with activity is another principle. It admits of the plain space : the pause. All the arts profit by it. In the composition of pictures it secures the disposition of broad open parts amongst the massing of material, incidents, and details. In landscape the sky often represents this placed relief. A picture may be judged to be badly composed if every square inch of it clamours for the spectator's attention ; and this is what happens when the forms are distributed equally as are the squares on a chess board.

A plain space is specially schemed for by good artists as being, equally with ornament, a source of beauty. The reader has perhaps often seen a band of ornament on a building, or in gold and silver smithery, where at intervals among the enrichments there occurs an open space : it may be a blank shield or cartouche. He does not realise, perhaps, how much

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these spots which the artist has refrained from ornamenting conduce to his pleasure in the work. Their emptiness is a loveliness. Yet without the opulent ornament which surrounds them, what are they ?

A fine picture usually displays this principle. In landscapes the restful quality of a large tract in the composition is half the battle. The sky, being as a rule less full of incident than the other parts, conveniently supplies this advantage. Smooth sands, still waters, and wide plains may do so likewise. Such resources are perhaps even more indispensable in monochrome works where colour is not available for the combining of incidents. In portraiture and interiors the serene effect of an expanse of quiet wall-space is always of value.

Somewhat allied to this principle is that of the "hole in the composition," or the "way out," as it has been called, which provides for a clear view through intervening things to a distance beyond. To look out into freedom is pleasurable, whether it be through an opening in a wall or between trees. It is because we do not like to feel shut in, whether it be in a room, or a wood, or amongst houses, that the vista has always been a popular device. It plays admirably into the hands of the designer in the management of his pattern.

### COLOUR

When our gallery visitor has arrived at the stage where he begins to be conscious of the colour of pictures he may be tempted to think, especially if the light is poor, that the pictures make rather a dull show : that any "poster-artist" let loose amongst them with his *gouache* colours could considerably enhance their attractiveness in an hour. So he might, according to primitive ideas. The young and primitive enjoy bright tints, of course ; but the brightness and purity of hues are not their only charm. There exists a mysterious fascination that has nothing to do with the assertiveness of a newly-painted pillar-box, or the mordancy of a field of charlock. The mysterious charm is the "quality" of hues ; a term that would require a volume to itself to explain. For present purposes we may grant that quality is the exact opposite of crudeness ; and that it is due largely to graduation and blending of

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hues in a way that does not neutralise and “muddy” them. The poster-artist would find in a few cases that the works of the early masters already boasted of hues besides which his vermilions and chromes and vivid greens would be put to shame because of their want of quality.

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE COLOUR SENSE

Colour is among the very last of the delights of Art to be appreciated to the full. The response to the stimulus of a fine blend, or a choice breaking and weaving of hues, requires the sensitiveness that matures only with long observation.

For although the brightness and intensity of colours fascinate the child and the savage, yet in peoples as in persons, the Colour Sense is at first comparatively crude. Man inherits some appreciation of Colour from his brute ancestry. He shares it with the greater part of the animal world, wherein the attractiveness of Colour is a guide in, if not an impulse towards, the propagation of species. But since Colour lacks the material evidences of touch and solidity which make form and shape so easily apprehended, its comparative spirituality is overlooked until the mind has become refined enough to employ it as a means of art expression. In the Homeric poems and Greek plays even the names of hues are confused and indefinite, and no clear understanding is revealed of the refinements of Colour as we know it. The traces of Colour found upon statuary point to a conventional and purely decorative use of a few bald tints; and it must be assumed that contemporary critics of Greek paintings were themselves not more advanced than the artists in these matters. If, then, the highly cultivated Greek was elementary in colour appreciation, we may be sure that the barbarian has always been. There is evidence to suppose that sensitiveness to light-rays is even now still developing in the human eye, and that to-day it is greater than ever it has been. The same progress occurs in the individual. Practice and experience increase colour responsiveness, and a delight in colour subtleties is a sign of artistic maturity.

Dr. F. W. Edridge-Green, an expert on colour-blindness, has given his convictions upon this point in his writings and



lectures. His opinion is that "though we have gained in colour perception, we have lost in acuteness of sight. It is well known that savages have a far more acute sight than is normal in civilised communities. . . . It is easy to suppose that primitive man saw all objects of a uniform hue, just as they appear in a photograph, but that he had a very acute perception for differences of luminosity. In the course of time a new faculty of the mind, a colour-perceiving centre, became developed. This colour-perceiving centre in its undeveloped state was first only able to appreciate those differences which are caused by the waves of light which are physically most different. Evolution than proceeded . . ."

This is all very difficult to explain. The theory of colour-vision has indeed proved unexplainable so far. It rests upon the hypotheses of various researchers who by no means agree. Yet there is safety in saying that Colour, like so many other wonderful phenomena, is subjective. Colour sensations originate in the brain: different objects do not reflect light: they do not reflect actual colour. The surfaces of things reflect some of the light that reaches them and absorb the rest. What and how much they reflect or absorb depends upon the "wave-length" of the "rays" of which light is supposed to consist; and the difference in wave-lengths results in more or less "frequency" in the passage of the rays as they impinge upon the retina of the eye. It is the degree of frequency of these wave attacks or vibrations that determines hue; and it is the proportional quantities of vibrating rays of different hue that determine the resulting colour sensations in our brain.

A beam of light passing through a glass prism is broken up or diffracted into an array of hues like a rainbow, and this array is called a spectrum. It shows the component rays as giving the colours from violet, at one end, by continuous gradation through blue into green, then merging into yellow, then into orange and to red, beyond which the eye can see no more. This invisible portion of the spectrum is called the *infra-red* section; that at the beginning before the violet comes into view being known as the *ultra-violet* section. The red end of the spectrum is that of the longest wave-length of the rays.

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When light falls upon an object ; for example, upon a billiard-cloth, some mysterious absorption of the long wave-length rays, the red, takes place and only the green are reflected to our eyes. Lemons and grape fruit appear yellow because they absorb the shorter wave-lengths, the blue, and reflect the red and green, which together give us the sensation of yellow. That is very baldly stating the theory. Of course, there are a thousand and one modifying circumstances, such as the nature of the light and of the texture of the object, to mention nothing more.

Colour does not entirely depend upon absorption and reflection however ; it is caused also by deflection of rays.

This is not the place to go very thoroughly into the causes of all the splitting up of normal white rays by diffraction ; but briefly it may be stated that the component rays of a beam of white light are deflected variously when they pass through translucent matters of different densities, such as air, mist, water, or glass ; or through the layers of material such as opal and mother-of-pearl. The shorter the wave-length the greater the deflection. The diffraction and consequent deflection by density thus separates the waves or currents of vibration, which arriving to stimulate nerve-ends in the " cones " of the retina, cause the sensation of various colours and thus make us conscious of the glory of sunsets and the fascination of the pearl. By the same principles the droppings of motor cars on smooth wet roads show iridescence.

It is presumed that light vibrations tell the same story normally to all mankind ; yet mankind has not in all individual cases the same response. Two eyes in one head frequently give varying reports ; and there are physiological causes, such as " retinal fatigue," which modify the sensations of Colour subjectively. Retinal fatigue is a term coined by the scientists for expediency ; it should not be thought an implication of debility. The probability is that this process of evoking a true complementary to one that has already strongly stimulated the retinal nerves is really a valuable provision for the intensification of colour contrasts. The scientists demonstrate it by the experiment of making the subject look steadily at one colour and then turn his eyes to another " field," where, of course,

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the complementary colour seems to appear in the same shaped patch. It is a phenomenon of the commonest experience, and does not seem to me to argue anything but ready and acute sensitiveness, which is surely a boon ; and to painters a most covetable faculty since it intensifies and enriches all Colour by the agency of contrast.

When we consider how great a part the mind plays in the perception of Colour, and to what extent the physiological machinery of vision is controlled by the mind, there remains no difficulty in believing that colour vision is a more highly elaborated process with us than it was with man in his primordial state. Colour-blindness is believed by some to be due to arrested development, or a " throw-back " to a primitive degree of development.

In another place I have ventured the assertion that the sensitiveness to Colour which is characteristic of human vision to-day is due to the art of painting. There is no other organised effort for the refinement of colour vision. The analytical method of painters is progressive because it grows by what it feeds on. In these days the unlettered can understand and appreciate pictorial representation which centuries ago would have been beyond the grasp of the intellectuals of the day. The development is very rapid in the individual when once the stages are set out for him.

Mention has been made of the elementary nature of colour discrimination by the Ancient Greeks. This is a fact that occasions great surprise to those who are keen to feel how superlatively refined was their sense of form ; how impeccable their ideas of decoration and ornament in its sculptured application. There are many fragments of the finest Greek work that reveal traces of colouring, and it is the colouring of our pillar boxes. That is to say, it is a tint applied in flat areas, harmonious in the quality and combination of hues, doubtless, but yet in its nature primitive. In the so-called " dark ages " men coloured the walls of their halls in the same way, only they were at a higher stage of taste in this respect than the Ancient Greeks, for they picked out their tints in stencilled patterns : they did not follow the naturalistic forms of things with necessarily unnatural flat tints, and thus confuse essentials.

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It might be asked why some glimmering of the Beauty of Truth should not have come to the Ancient Greek in his colouring as it did in the form of statuary. But the cases are different. Colour-sense development comes with the painter's effort in translating tints from Nature to pictures ; not in tinting objects conventionally. The Greek's bedizenment of his statues had its beginnings in religion. Images of the gods were painted when they were at the barbaric stage. The picking out of forms with different tints survived through the archaic period, and was not relinquished even in Roman times ; the fullest evidence of a complete system of colouring is found in the archaic or immature period. As the forms grow finer this evidence seems to wane. The Parthenon statues show no trace of colour on the nude parts, but only a kind of wax coating. This argues more restraint than the full colouring of earlier times. It would seem that at the best period a generalisation had been reached, and according to some authorities this typical or merely suggestive colour was used as a help in distinguishing the forms which would be lost, at a distance from the eye, in the glare of a southern sun upon the white marble.

But the tinting of statuary is not the complete measure of the colour sense of the Greeks. They painted pictures ; and though nothing of them remains we have the writings of eye-witnesses who extolled them as being equal to the sculpture of the period. An antique fresco known by the name of the "Aldobrandini Marriage" was found in Rome. It is believed to be a copy of a Greek painting, and although it has suffered much at the hands of Time, in the view of experts it bears evidence to justify the praises of the classic writers who found the paintings of Apelles, Zeuxis, and others so admirable. But, however praiseworthy may have been the draughtsmanship of Attic painting, there is good reason to suppose that its colour would not enthrall us to-day as Greek sculpture can. There is no lack of the true Greek power in the Marriage scene mentioned here, but it is the power of portraying form. If we could see its colour as it left the artist's hands we should probably find it much like the mediæval missal.

According to the elder Pliny, the Greeks in the earliest

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attempts used but four pigments: white, yellow, red, and black; and although it is possible to make beautiful effects with so limited a palette, yet the results must have fallen far short of those of more complete schemes which included blue and green, as did those of the later days of Zeuxis, Apelles, and Protogenes. For ochre, choice as it is, does not fill all the demands of a yellow pigment; nor does a single red such as an oxide of iron. It would be due to a desire on the painters' parts to widen their scope that fresh pigments would be sought and manufactured. But the desire would have been bred in a sense of dissatisfaction that means were not equal to aims; and the aims of the painters must have had the backing of clients and patrons. So the development went on; but it could not have gone on without a quickening of the colour sense. The colour sense of Apelles was already five centuries, or more, removed from that of Homer, and this probably meant much in the amazingly rapid development of Greek artistic feeling. Pigments had been invented and others discovered, as we learn from several classic writers. As time went on many others were imported. Vetruius says that vermilion, purple, malachite green, indigo, and a certain blue, were too costly for general use and were paid for by the patron, not by the painter.

It is on record that the colouring of the pictures of the Greeks was sober and harmonious—which is what one might suppose from their limited means—and that the Roman colouring was more showy. The Romans, we know, had much further extended their palette; but that fact does not seem to have helped them in painting. Was that because their colour sense was less refined than that of the Greeks?

Little as we know of statue-colouring, to what extent the sense of Colour developed in the pictures of antiquity we know less. In mosaics it took a sort of middle course between realism and decoration, and arrived nowhere in particular; but where it did reach, Form was still better understood than Colour, as the copy in mosaic of a picture of "The Battle of Issus," found at Pompeii, would appear to bear out. Mosaic is a clumsy method for realism. The Byzantine mosaics are renowned for their splendour of gold and colour. It is a bar-

baric splendour, and those who claim any merit for the form and draughtsmanship of these decorations of the Early Christians have more enthusiasm for their symbolic content than judgment of the skill they show. In the later day when mosaics were made to adorn the domes of the Greek Church, the pride and glory in ideal beauty of Greek sculpture had long since passed from its native soil : it was then but dimly echoed from specimens in the palatial homes of Roman grandees.

### “LOCAL COLOUR”

The distinction between the perception of Colour by the early painters and its appreciation to-day is a kind of conflict for beauty in which all who have not trained the eye are probably on the side of the old masters. The difference is between seeing the colour of things as modified by circumstances, and seeing it as something it is merely believed to be. In other words, the difference is between discerning actual tints and taking “local colour” for granted.

Local Colour is the term we use for the intrinsic tint of a thing : a green tablecloth, a red pillar-box. It does not require much cultivation of the colour sense to find that a pillar-box—say a newly-painted one, to ensure its being all over alike—is of different colours on different days. On a cloudy day it will look a lighter tint of red on top because it catches more light at that spot. In other respects there is not a vast amount of variety in its general colour. But let the sun shine from a clear sky : then it is as many colours as one cares to wait to count : a light mauve on top, even in shadow, because of the blue illumination from the sky ; its vertical sides showing less of that blue light. If it catch a gleam of sun, it will glow with orange like a hot coal. On the opposite side to the sun its own local red will be modified into differing grades of tint according to any lights which are reflected into it. The sunny pavement will shoot up rays to make the red an orange hue, but less bright than the direct sun orange hue. Anything that may be near and brilliantly lit will send some coloured light into the red to modify it, so that one could find an almost inexhaustible gamut of varied tints running through the entire scales of orange, red, and purple.

The more shiny the surface, the more will these effects be apparent.

All this will happen with a strong, indomitable, overpowering colour like vermilion. When similar conditions are applied to a weaker colour the modifications amount to alterations, and in the case of a white object the colours of neighbouring objects are seen repeated. White linen lying on the ground under a blue sky is not white ; it is blue. The eaves of a whitewashed cottage on a sunny road are not the shady white that they are on a grey day ; they are a bright yellow-ochre tint.

Painters look out for these changes and reactions, which are to them the very joy and poetry of Colour ; but the ordinary person is inclined, unconsciously, to regard them as so many embarrassing disturbances of what they consider the *proper* colour. In questioning people who do not profess to be initiated in these matters, it is found that there are certain traditional ideas of what the colour of objects ought to be, and these ideas overcome any actual vision that might correct them. It is popularly supposed that grass is always green, that clear skies are always blue, that flesh is a kind of pink, that collars and cuffs are white, and so forth. Of course, they are, but more often than not they are other colours altogether to the discerning eye.

The local tint may be defined, therefore, as the colour of an object in a pure white light unaffected by any stray reflections from other sources. But these are conditions which scarcely ever occur. Theoretically there can be no such thing as local colour, because it is impossible to imagine a *normal* light of any kind. Ordinary daylight and sunlight differ, and artificial lights may be of any tinge. But the term "local colour" is a useful generalisation in conversation and argument. It has an accepted meaning. We speak of green peas, red poppies, and we describe heraldic "tinctures" with perfect understanding by merely naming them. These generalisations mercifully spare us from a mass of circumlocution, though we are quite aware that circumstances of lighting will modify and perhaps entirely change the appearance of the objects indicated. The point to bear in mind is that material things

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are tinted by a thousand agencies that the untutored eye takes no heed of, and only in modern painting is the fact recognised that the hue of an object depends upon the colour of the light that is, as one might say, splashed upon it from every direction. People can see this easily enough in strong effects like red sunsets and firelight, but few can see how the light of the sky affects the appearance of things.

In the centuries before the development of modern colour discrimination the primitive painters were entirely happy and successful in their simple allegiance to local tints. If they wished to represent a thing like a vermilion pillar-box, they would apply a flat area of colour of the identical tint of which the object itself was painted.

It may be broadly stated that all early painting represents objects by their local colours ; and that is why the student will find that the great works of the past, beautiful as they are, fail to give the appearance of convincing naturalism that characterises painting of comparatively recent times. But we can enjoy perfectly the colour of the past by accepting it simply as colour, asking nothing of the old painters that they knew not how to give.

The development of methods in the discernment of colour phenomena is most easily traced by studying the painting of draperies. At first neither lights nor shades are attempted, but a plain tint is used flatly. Next comes a pale grade of colour for light parts and a deep grade of the same colour for shadows. Following this the primitives got nearer the truth by "glazing" a rich, transparent tint over the dark shadows.

By this time the beauty of colour had become so absorbing that men caught at the opportunity afforded by rich stuffs, "shot" with various tints. The beautiful "Virgin and Child Enthroned," in the National Gallery, by Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506), exemplifies the love with which such a system of modulation of tints was enjoyed at this stage of development. Later painters discovered the beauty of reflected lights in shadows, and from this stage progressed to the actual change of colour that light and shade involves. It is pardonable to think that the greatest of the old painters must to some extent have seen and loved, as we do to-day, these wonderful changes



of hue in Nature, but avoided them as an unnecessary complexity in representation ; or else did not dare to paint them in face of strong tradition and popular vision. Even the Dutch, who had a studious delight in effects of illumination, did little more than add light and shade to local tints. The truth of outdoor light was gradually arrived at by the English.

#### COLOUR AS INTERPRETATION OF LIGHT

In 1870 Claude Monet came to England with Camille Pissarro and found in Turner's pictures a new revelation of light in colour and of colour as light and shade. Monet followed in Turner's path, though not precisely with his methods. Where Turner (1775-1851) had generalised, Monet analysed. What the master had done as an inspired poet, the disciple sought to do as a determined scientist ; and his experiments brought forth iridescence, which in turn engendered "*pointillisme*."

To look at a well-executed modern work painted before the recent *débâcle*, known as "post-impressionism," is probably to find that a figure represented in the open air has patches of blue upon the hair and shoulders representing light from the sky ; a light dress will have glowing passages of colour reflected from any near bright objects, such as sunlit walls and paths. There may be scarcely a touch of what one would call the intrinsic local colour, yet the complete effect is dazzlingly true, and the spectator arrives at a perfect concept of the local colour through the sum of these adventitious tints.

Comparing a picture painted in the manner described above with say, the "Ansidei Madonna," by Raphael, one sees the gulf that yawns between the vision, aim, and method of that peerless work of the Prince of Painters and a picture by any well-trained painter of to-day. What does the difference portend ? Is it anything more than the simple fact that one is of the sixteenth century and the other of the twentieth ? The uninformed student, especially if he is young, is disposed to scoff at the earlier painter because his work is four centuries behind the times. He does not recognise the fact that sixteenth century painters were probably far more keen and enthusiastic in learning natural phenomena than are the young

men of to-day, living in circumstances which make ignorance a disgrace. If painting of Raphael's day lacks modern knowledge of colour phenomena—as it must equally lack knowledge of electricity and aeronautics, were those matters necessary to it—it surpasses modern painting infinitely in certain aspects of Art that do not depend upon Science ; and it is in those things that Art's strength and glory consist. For no other reason is it that the greatest of the old masters retain their supremacy.

In the fervid pursuance of a scientific enlightenment modern painters have frequently cast loose from this non-scientific anchorage, committing crimes against the artistic principles that all men at all times have endorsed as eternally true. Monet, the French painter, in his zeal for seizing facts of colour and light, produced marvellous records of these phenomena which, *as pictures*, pleased nobody then nor since. He deliberately avoided all cares of composition, and took anything that came as subject-matter, for the sake of registering his nearness to literal fact. He painted two hayricks over and over again under every aspect of weather throughout a year—splendid singleness of purpose ! But now that every painter, more or less, can do these things—thanks to him, of course—his works have a historical value only, whilst the works of many a man before his time, uninformed as they may be, still delight as pictures, because, being more than a splendid experiment, they have something to say to us of elemental depth of feeling.

Monet was inspired by Turner, who was the greater pioneer of the two ; but Turner's works were pictures. His responses to light and colour were not less amazing, but they were less the motive for painting. They came to Turner's hand without fuss or claim or heroic pose ; they appeared in his work, not as embarrassing novelties, but as recognised and unexpected delights ; not as the sole *aim*, but as the *means* to pictures invented, gestated, and produced with such labours as the old masters endured. "The Ulysses Deriding Polyphemus" is more akin to the "Ansidei Madonna" in spirit than to "The Hayricks," though the latter was cousin-german to it.

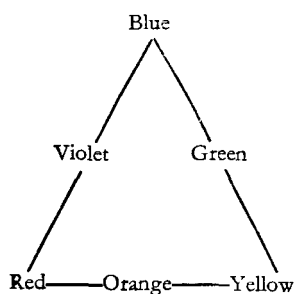
It will be seen that the art historian's method of announcing

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each new achievement in terms that imply disparagement of everything antecedent to it is not the method of these pages. That we must study and learn, no one denies ; but we must do so only for the advantage of better understanding and increased response. And while doing so we must pray to be saved from the foolishness of supposing, and trying to make others suppose, that what is not "the latest" is something wrong and ridiculous that should be supplanted in our thoughts and removed from our gallery walls to make way for works of any sort that are "up-to-date."

### WARM AND COLD HUES

From some cause, buried probably in man's earliest nature, when instincts were in the making, certain colours raise sensa-



tions akin to those of warmth, and others are allied to the feelings of cold. I have elsewhere hazarded a theory that might account for this division, pushing back the causes to the comforts of the sun and of fire on one side, and to ice, snow, discomfort, and death on the other ; thus justifying the universal preference for warm hues.

No other theory has been advanced to upset this, so presumably it may stand for the present. Most people know that the so-called primary colours (in pigment, not in light) are blue, red, and yellow. If these three tints are set in a triangle, they may each be extended on both sides till they meet the extensions of their neighbours, and where they merge they will make the secondary colours, violet, green, and orange. Therefore every hue has its complementary on the opposite parts of the triangle. The blue at the apex is cold ; warmth comes with the changes to violet and green and from those to yellow and red, and culminates at the combination of yellow and red—*i.e.*, orange. Blue and orange therefore may be regarded as poles, or opposites, and it is possible to use them as opposites in a painting and by their extremes to express distance, vapour,

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etherealness, and lightness of tone by cool colour ; and nearness, solidity, and strength of tone by warm colour. This is perfectly naturalistic and scientific. Blue is a "retiring" colour ; red and yellow are less retiring. That is to say, that if three flat surfaces were each painted with these colours and set up at a little distance, the yellow would seem closest to the eye and the blue farthest off. Painters have constantly made use of this scale of hues and by it have expressed not the literality of a scene but its spirituality. The early English water-colour painters used warm and cold tints as a kind of formula in their sketches, the blue distance meeting and merging with the brown of the nearer parts.

The old masters understood warm and cold colours well enough, and juxtaposed them for the beauty of contrast and relief. But all the centuries furnish evidence that warm colour is most favoured by man. Even the blues of the finest colourists if they could be cut out from their surroundings and tested by a pure blue pigment, would be found to approach closely to a secondary tint ; that is, they would be a good way towards the warm pole.

Warm colour may, of course, be too hot, and artists have a term, "foxy," by which they describe tints open to this objection ; but the commonest fault of beginners and unfeeling artists is coldness of colour. The "golden glow" which is popularly considered to be the characteristic of an "old master" has, however, frequently been proved to be due to the yellow of the varnish upon it. Some painters seem to have used an oil varnish as a final glaze, and to have warmed it to a rosy-yellowish tint in order to impart to the whole picture a glowing harmoniousness ; and it has frequently happened that picture-restorers, with a creditable motive of cleaning off the dirt and of removing the opaqueness of a varnish that has become horny and brown, have at the same time removed the harmonising factor of the glaze ; so that although we may see more than we did before, we see it unpleasantly cold and without the modifying and qualifying which the painter intended for his tints. Some of the landscapes of Claude have suffered in this way. It is equally evident that certain Venetian pictures in our galleries have had the delicacies of surface colour—the

greys and azures—reduced to a rich treacly transparency by lavish application of varnish.

Pictures in a blue key are by no means uncommon. More occasionally they may be seen in a red key; less often in a green, and so on. But not one of these schemes is in really general use. Moreover, they are usually consequent upon the subject-matter depicted, and that is not a condition of the golden or yellow glow, which can be felt over blue skies, green trees or red robes indiscriminately. It would appear therefore that yellow is better fitted in its nature for a pervading tint than any other colour; and the preference for it may be proved to be only partially due to the fact that it happens to be the colour which oil and varnish have assumed with age upon notable works of art.

Yellow is the colour which is most suggestive of light. It is the pigment that best stands the test of attenuation into nothingness, or white. Blue and red when taken by the utmost gradation towards white still retain their bluey or pinky cast as long as they can be discerned at all. But yellow merges imperceptibly into white. It anticipates whiteness long before it is short of being yellow, and at a certain point defies classification as either one or the other. It is the generally accepted link between colour and whiteness. Palettes are "set" with yellow next the white, and Turner's sensations of brightness were almost invariably made by approaching white through the yellow gradations. The sun himself is either yellow or white-hot yellow.

One of the marks of immature or indifferent painting is lawless and discordant colouring. On the other hand, that which imparts to pictures the safe, dignified and masterly look which carries assurance to the spectator is the proper influence of the key throughout all the differing tints. This key-colour acts as a kind of medium or vehicle for all the other colours. They lie within it and are affected by it; but are not of it. If one were to paint upon a piece of canvas with French blue just as it comes from the colourman's tube, and then hold it in close comparison with a patch of what looked like a similar blue on the robe of a figure, say, by Titian; it would be found to appear cold and raw by contrast with the Titian blue, which,

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in its turn, would seem to have been modified by a rosy yellow. But upon removing the raw blue the other would look pure enough taken together with the other colours of the picture. That rosy yellow tone is, in fact, felt through all the colours, each of which it attunes to the same key.

### GRADATION IN COLOUR

One principle upon which good colour depends, namely, the gradation of its intensity, is very generally recognised. Even quite unsophisticated people are alive to its charm. Gradation makes a strong appeal to the lay mind ; and yet, within the last half century the charms of gradation have lost prestige in some unaccountable way amongst painters of the so-called decorative class. Such artists must be actuated by other motives than the quest of beauty or they would never wittingly set their faces against one of the most potent principles of beauty in colour.

In the poster and the child's picture-book the use of areas of unmodulated or " flat " colour has become general. Where the colour itself is good, and a specially schemed design makes the flatness legitimate, there is no doubt much to be said for the expediency of such a convention in the cheaper productions of this kind of work. But the picture-maker, decorative or otherwise, stands in no need of such illogical modes which do but stultify his resources. One sees modern works looking partly like posters and partly like mediæval missals. Their colour is bright and insistent. It comes at one with an onslaught and is highly exciting. But in this respect it is the antithesis of what decorative painting should be, and intrinsically it is not beautiful colour since it is but a patchwork of even tints without subtlety. To be beautiful, colour must ebb and flow, palpitate, melt and crystallise. It can do this only by the mingling and interplay of its elements ; and at the same time it must, to change the metaphor, dwindle here and flame there.

Even the gradated black of a print or a monochrome drawing is a joy ; much more so are the subtle cadencies of colour, whether they depict an evening sky or the modelling of a beer barrel. A patch of grey or black is empty, passionless, even dead ; but modulate it so that its tones vary from deep to high

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and it becomes alive. It has gained a soul. It expresses movement and purpose. More still can this life and soul be given to a patch of colour which, however beautiful intrinsically, must remain but a house-painter's "coat" whilst it is without modulation.

Nature brings gradation about in countless ways; for example, by the diminishing of force, as in the varying number and kind of pigment cells in organisms; by the turning away of surfaces from the light; by the attenuation of mists on earth and of vapour in the sky; by the variation of luminosity in coloured rays, and so on. Visible creation without gradation is too unlovely a possibility to think of. No pictures can be beautiful without it, and such as are painted without it are tolerable only by reason of Nature's own modifications on their monotonous surfaces; for natural gradation cannot be eliminated except by special contrivances and artificial conditions.

We find in looking at old works that gradation appears in the skies of the landscape backgrounds when it appears nowhere else—who indeed could fail to observe with admiration the crescendo and diminuendo of the sky?—but its appearance on draperies is often more marked in primitive work than in pictures after the sixteenth century. These earlier painters were no doubt feeling after light and shade when they attenuated the local colour of robes by thinning it down upon the rise of a fold; but the fact remains that such expedients in the works of Fra Angelico (1387-1455) and others impart a certain kind of quality in colour less frequent in more advanced performances.

Gradation thus seems to have served a double purpose for the early painters. They delighted in it both for its expression of modelling and for its modulation which added the charm of variety to a tract of colour. It is a noteworthy fact that this principle, so fascinating wherever it occurs, whether in colour, in tone, or from one hue to another, always has been, and still is, a never-failing stimulus to the beauty sense. The painter revels in it as soon as Realism begins to lure him from his flat tints. It is everywhere around us. It is the secret of the beauty of common things, as well as of the sublimest effects of

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Nature. Our "modernists" in Art do without it nevertheless.

### IRIDESCENCE

Another factor in the quality of colour is Iridescence. Unlike Gradation, it is by no means an ancient resource in painting; it is, in fact, a new discovery. The probability is that few people were ever aware of it in the early centuries. Even to-day it is common to find people claiming to *see* colour in accordance with their acceptance of conventional local tint. A pathway through a meadow, for example, will be pronounced brown or black or grey, when it is probably purple. A "tarred" road in the rain remains "black," never the colour of the sky. Before landscape was painted for its own sake there could not have been a much different condition of things even among painters. After the Dutch had been to Nature and learnt to see something of her colour the horizons of vision widened; but still the accidental notes of sky-tint everywhere were not yet perceived. The rainbow was represented fairly often, but only as something quite distinct. No one saw rainbow colours anywhere else, except perhaps in spray, and glass, and diamonds. And when Turner in his later years saw and painted all Nature prismatically he was at first believed in by few.

The value of iridescent or prismatic colour—and it is valued only by the advanced observer—lies in the heightened virility and beauty it imparts. But it is largely "a way of seeing," and usually an artist's way; and in that respect it is doubtless enhanced by auto-suggestion; for, as we have seen, colour sensations are mental processes. A painter who *looks for* variety in colour, can *find* it. If he determines that a touch of his brush must be a certain tint, he will, by the most potent factor of contrast, assuredly see the adjacent spot much qualified by a tint complementary to the first. This hypersensitiveness to colour is possibly due in some measure to retinal fatigue, as already suggested; but for the most part it is a habit of the mind, and grows, with practice, to an intense degree. As a general rule, painters get more "colourful" as they grow older.

To the untutored eye prismatic colouring does not look true,



and therefore its popular appeal is much limited. Moreover, like every genuine advance, it has its exploiters, who without the real impulse copy the mere Form in a way that fails to evoke a Content, and so a praiseworthy idea gets discredited. The most notorious method of turning iridescence, or what passed for it, to profitable account arose in Paris and became known as "*Pointillisme*." It consisted in placing the paint on the canvas in little separate dabs of pure primary colour.

This plan took rise from a theory that to disintegrate a tint into its component primaries and apply these side by side would be to give greater vibration to the tint when it was being re-formed in the spectator's eye by the merging of the component patches at a distance. The theory proved groundless, as might be expected. All that happened was that the colour went grey by such disintegration, and by portions of bare canvas showing between the dots. This greyness was no doubt an advantage in one way, since it gave homogeneity and atmospheric quality to tints that might have been too raucous without it.

It will be found that an arrangement of interspersed dots of middle chrome and Antwerp blue, each of about half an inch in size, gives no appearance of green at close quarters. At the distance of forty feet there may be a slight suggestion of green if the dots are out of focus ; but this is, of course, infinitesimal and inconsiderable compared with the full and rich green that would result from a mixture of these same pigments upon the palette. If the distant dots are sharply focussed by binoculars the green sensation vanishes entirely. When we reduce them to between one-eighth to one-quarter of an inch a little more suggestion of a third tint is called up, especially with an arrangement of blue and red dots, which more readily yield their purple. But here again they require to be seen with some diffusion. No doubt smaller dots still would show further assimilation, until finally we should arrive at specks of colour like the woven threads of fabrics, which, as we know, do result in some sort of general colour ; though not the bright hues that might be expected from the threads.

It seems essential then that the dots should be so small as to be indiscernible at the distance from which a picture should be

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viewed, otherwise they remain independent primaries instead of combining as a secondary. Rarely, if ever, has one seen a *pointilliste* picture carried out with the mechanical thoroughness that such a condition demands; and it is not to be wondered at that the laboriousness of the method places it beyond the human possibility of establishing the theory assumed.

The misfortune of all artistic development is that it necessarily proceeds by a series of novelties, and novelties turn the brain of so many people. When a new idea first makes its appearance it is in the forefront of all that concerns it, and much time has to pass before it settles to the level of all ideas that have gone before it; where, shorn of the attractions of mere novelty, it takes its chance of winning on its merits.

Painting, we must not forget, is an art, not a science. Its aim is not knowledge, but joy and beauty. Therefore its advancements and discoveries are futile unless they minister to those aims.

### THE PURSUIT OF TRUTH AND BEAUTY

The primitive painters gloried indeed in purity of colour. The works of Fra Angelico, for example, are the delight of children, simply because of their bright and unmodified hues, wherein it appears that the gentle monk had always stopped short in fright of any touch of tone or shade that appeared to him to sully their purity. But in the case of Cima da Conegliano (1460-1517), we find purity of hue enriched and strengthened by a warm deep glow of tone, whether used as shade or otherwise; and after this richer aspect we should turn back to the Angelicos to find them perhaps a little thin and empty; more ethereal undoubtedly, but far less human in Content. Later works of the Venetian school, we should find, revealed another change. The transparent warm glow has somewhat given place to another quality which adds a further delight. This is a kind of surface bloom of colour that seems to add atmosphere to the noble compositions and to wrap every incident of the picture in one harmonious homogeneity—a touch of silveriness in the richness.

With Titian (1490-1576) there is the same oneness throughout,

but a more fearless statement of individual colours, the blue of skies, the mellow and golden flesh tints, the positive tints of robes, skins, fruits, and foliage. Titian is held to be the king of colourists among the Venetians. In his old age he favoured a cooler scheme. The deep, rich coloration of Tintoretto (1518-1594) seeks the qualifying grey again, which however is never positive grey, but a delicious cooling of the Titian richness. With Velasquez, the Spaniard (1599-1660), grey as a positive tint comes to its own. An aristocracy of colour, displaying restraint and decorum, has suppressed the full-blooded exuberance of the Italians, and grey, tender and yielding, is the groundwork into which passages of rich black and spots of crimson and white harmonise with the flesh tints that seem to be made up from the same palette.

From the day of these mighty works there was with few exceptions little further evidence of a masterly delight in colour for its own sake until the time of our own Turner, who, from his middle period onward, produced works in landscape that hold their own with the gorgeous colour of the past. In the Tate Gallery the visitor may see, if he can get the aggressive crimson wallpaper out of his eye, the high-water marks of colour. Turner's works are in a magnificent gallery, where they appear to have been treated as adjuncts to a scheme of saloon decoration, and this detracts sadly from their glow and richness by swamping and paralysing the spectator's eye with thousands of square feet of crimson wall. At the National Gallery the most resplendent of the Turners show to far better advantage in the clearer light and on a more neutral background.

"Ulysses deriding Polyphemus," "The Fighting Temeraire," and others, give us again, but in a higher key, the gamut of the old masters, with the added grace of a truth to natural effect at which the old masters had not arrived.

Turner had seen the possibilities of gradation in the skies of Claude (1600-1682) and carried its charms over every inch of his own works. But iridescence he discovered for himself. His pictures in their multiplicity constitute a kind of epitome of the whole of painting. He begins with carefully drawn outlines within which his tints are accurately placed and confined.

## SOME ASPECTS OF FORM

As he wins to more confidence and experience of Nature his drawing becomes less meticulously insisted upon, and colour expresses modelling. At the end of his career colour has triumphed over form, and whilst proportion and modelling is felt more intensely than ever, the confining of colour within rigidly prescribed areas is abandoned.

This is one great difference between the mature Turner's colour and that of the earlier painters : his is fluid and largely independent of shape ; theirs is *applied* to certain prescribed areas and within those areas it is based upon the prevalent idea of the "local tint."

The advancements of which we have treated were each, in a way, a disparagement of what had gone before ; but to the wise critic they are but the unfolding of a series of stages, or of variations in responsiveness, every one of which has charm of some sort because it shows a further capture of truth. The demands of Realism have always been the chief incentive. They found the primitive Italian's delight in bright unsullied colour too childish. Light and shade succeeded as an aim, and colour surrendered its brilliance in the tonal depths of *chiaroscuro*. Next, light for its own sake was pursued to brighten the obscurities into which painting inevitably fell ; and light, it was discovered, was colour after all. Finally, various tricks were tried in the hope of catching Realism in the toils of joyous and primitive brilliance. It was all an evolution, legitimate and natural enough. But after that, the Deluge of "Post Impressionism," with its mud and crudities, showed to what extent an industrial age can become atrophied in artistic judgment, accepting upon the mere word of Publicity what no other age could ever have accepted—the fœtus of abnormality and incompetence.

## CHAPTER VI

### IDEALISM, NATURALISM, REALISM, AND LITERALISM

THESE four "isms" are never missing from any sustained criticism of the Arts, and they are pretty well understood by the layman. In a book of this kind, however, it is obligatory to give some exposition of their significance; and although to do so is to court the risks of platitude and truism, yet there is some incentive in the fact that the terms are very frequently used without discrimination. People are given to assuming that "ideal" has no meaning beyond either *perfect*, or else *an aim to strive for*. The other three terms are popularly used as synonyms.

The word "ideal" has so many applications in ordinary parlance that it is necessary to define its exclusive significance in Art. Of its philosophical implications we cannot here treat, beyond noting that the term is cognate with "idea." Idealism consequently refers to a painter's ideas respecting a thing before he sets about painting it. When he begins he has necessarily to think about making the representation recognisable. ("Modernists" feel no such obligation.) That involves Naturalism, since nothing can be conceived in the mind of man that is not derived from Nature. If the painter wishes that his scene or object shall appear as three-dimensional in its relation to space, he will be working for Realism; and if he believes that this end can be best achieved by exactly copying something that is before him, he has adopted Literalism.

The important fact emerging from this is that all four categories may be implicated in one work. Therefore, it must never be forgotten that this classification can apply to nothing more than the mere attitude of the artist towards his work. In no way whatever will it answer as a differentiation between pictures. The artist may be both realist and idealist

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at the same time. No one would deny that Turner, who is at the head of landscape idealists, is, in treating certain effects, any the less a realist. His vast knowledge of the realities of Nature came out in his idealistic work and made it convincing. To draw a hard and fast line between these two outlooks is practically impossible, since, in fact, they will not be separated, being both bound in Naturalism.

Idealism is an expression of all that is typical ; the *general* that is evolved from many *particulars*, purged of accidentals, littleness, and departures from the normal.

Naturalism is consonance with natural laws and principles.

Realism is the effort to express actuality, and can approach nearest to illusion. This also is necessarily naturalistic. It may achieve its object in any way, and does so more often by Impressionism, than by literal rendering.

Literalism is the exact portrayal of the particular to the uttermost detail. It is of no help either to reality or to ideality, because it is confined to accidentals.

The kind of mental outlook that Naturalism implies is one that requires everything in a picture to be naturally *possible*—if not probable. But the degree of possibility need not be high enough to pass a censorship of biologists. In Art, feeling is everything, demonstrable truth nothing. We want things to *look* right ; that is essential. Whether they *are* right or not is of minor importance. In the vegetable kingdom the artist may invent all sorts of new and unknown growths, so long as he makes them look as though they *could* grow if they *were* natural. This conviction of growth is one of the conditions of beauty in floral ornament. In the animal kingdom similarly we may have our dragons and hobgoblins, our nymphs and fairies, our dolphins and centaurs ; and the more natural they look the more we shall be satisfied, though we know they are really unnatural.

This law has always been so well understood that artists have from time immemorial made their fabulous creatures up from parts of real creatures. And that plan somehow seems to secure Naturalism. Although we know that in the case of the centaur there are two torsos to one head, contentment seems to come from assurance that both torsos are natural ones.

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The demons of Jan Brueghel (1589-1642) are marvellous inventions, but their trumpet snouts and other wild incongruous details of anatomy would induce an immediate charge of sin against Naturalism from anybody. Quite different are the centaurs, fauns, and nereids of Boecklin (1827-1901). These are conceived in a spirit of Naturalism that surpasses anything like it before or since. His animals positively belong to the wild. His centaurs are primordial horses—an extinct strain—that have become partly anthropomorphic. Together with his satyrs they far surpass the representations of antiquity in this respect.

What Naturalism cannot permit is a downright subversion of all *appearance* of natural law—specious and illusive as it may be. For example, the deliberate drawing of human limbs as though they were stove-pipes, and the painting of a girl's face with a bright pea-green complexion as a normality.

But these are the extreme examples of this age. Naturalism has not always been so far divorced from normal things. The artist, generalise as he may, dare not lose hold of Naturalism, since that, after all, is the great quest in which Idealism, Realism, and Literalism are each involved. It is the link between the artist and the spectator.

The combination of Beauty and Naturalism is the key to lasting success in Art. This the ages prove. A case here and there readily comes to the mind; the smile of "La Gioconda"; the wondering eyes of the Child in the "Sistine Madonna"; the smirk of Hals's "Cavalier" (unhappily hackneyed in these days), the poses and the simple earnestness of Millet's peasants; the awful sublimity of existence in Michelangelo's finest sculptured figures. Works like these owe their place in the hearts of laymen more to their Naturalism than to their technical qualities.

On the other hand we may instance an ever-present stumbling block to appreciation in the ridiculously small scale of the boats in the cartoon of "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes," attributed to Raphael. It is useless to say that such a trifle does not detract from the efficacy of the picture. Everyone can see that the boats should immediately sink. Even when it is admitted that perhaps the fault ministers to the grandeur of the

design, and may have been deliberately introduced for that express purpose, condonation is still impossible ; for it is equally bad policy in Art as in life to do ill that good may come of it. A supreme artist should have gained his fullest effect without puzzling all the world ; and he could have done so by using naturalistic truths for his great ends, which would then have been yet greater. We cannot assume that the designer of this cartoon—whoever he was—happened to be so ignorant of natural laws as not to be aware of his error. We must believe the anomaly to be intentional ; but with lesser men the lack of Naturalism arises from an ignorance of, as well as a blindness to, the obvious laws of Nature. All works of art that represent Nature, *pictorially* of course, demand Naturalism. A *decorative* treatment of forms often involves conventionalisation ; a sort of “standardisation,” which works against Naturalism, as we see in applied ornament. Conventionalism of this kind is not Idealism ; but it may be when it does not relinquish naturalism.

The idealist gives form to incidents and scenes that have generated partly or wholly in his own mind. He may, and usually does, get the germ of his subject from something seen ; but the material is gestated, so to speak, and the result appears with more generalisation and psychological import than its actual prototype possessed.

It is evident that the idealist is really more in need of knowledge born of observation and study than is the realist, since the former does not oblige himself to copy from Nature ; and were he, moreover, not realist enough to carry conviction, his Idealism would be but futile and meaningless. The more thoroughly a Turner could know the realities of sunsets and thunderstorms, the more magnificent or appalling could he render them by invention. It is therefore by the Naturalism which abides in Realism that we get the power of communicating the spiritual or romantic forces of things which constitutes Idealism in Art. The realist also might imagine scenes ; but he would present them in such a way that they might be mistaken for topographical records. Though they were beautiful examples of the painter's art there would be nothing idealistic in them.



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The idealist, feeling under no obligation to perpetuate repellent features, allows his imagination to better them. He thinks of the scene under a beautifying effect of light; he readjusts the proportions of its parts, and in other ways he modifies the conditions presented by the scene to the physical eye. But he, no more than the realist, departs from *Naturalism*, that is, from what *might be*. And what might be he finds in the general conditions stored by experience in his mind. To adopt them involves rejecting some actual features of the particular scene before him. Does a tree branch, through some accident of its growth, make an ugly line; the artist will restore the line from which, by ill fortune, it has departed.

In the case of one of Turner's romantic landscapes, the ideal is within easy reach, for the *particular* scarcely exists at all: everything is typical of Nature's *general* beauties and principles. The grand, expansive creations of his middle period stir our imagination to its depths by their story of light, and the colour that light calls up everywhere; over plains, hills, rocks, and seas; through clouds, mists, and foliage; shooting here through the openings of ruined palaces, and there between the towering tree stems; everything bathed in a glory and speaking not only of Nature as we know it, but of a world of dreams; an ideal land to which our spirits flee to live through again, in the few moments while the vision lasts, their inherited centuries of pristine life.

A good example of the distinction between Naturalism and Realism is afforded by Japanese landscapes, which are distinctly and markedly naturalistic, but could by no means be held to be realistic as Western Art accepts the term.

It must not be assumed that what a painter produces "out of his head" is less likely to be true to Nature in a broad sense—the ideal sense—than what results from copying the actual thing. There are many things that cannot be so copied—thunderstorms for example, and night scenes. All such effects that defy literalism have to be learnt. They are produced from the painter's memory and experience patiently built up by effectual observation. This is a method that ensures a knowledge of essentials, whereas a mere copying may perhaps involve no assimilation of knowledge for future use. Idealists

are thus at a better advantage than literalists who limit themselves to particular details.

The Periclean sculptors arrived at their ideals for gods and heroes by a system of pooling real measurements of bodily proportions and arriving at an average. As far as form was concerned such a generalisation constituted a standard and allowed no inclusion of individual variation. Whether or not such an ideal type could have corresponded with a Platonic "idea" of the human form before the generalisation was made, who can tell? It seems to me that the Platonic idea must in itself be variable with the individual who conceives it; yet to introduce the individual is to admit the very antithesis of the Ideal, namely, accidental variation. Plato always bothers one. But if we do not try to push home our notions logically, we can all admit that we know what is implied in the term "Ideal." We know that, broadly speaking, it means the pure type, not the individual specimen, and yet we have to admit that it can exist in and with the real.

The existence of the Ideal does not necessarily assume the repudiation of all else. It must not be thought that these arguments are recommendations or strictures respecting likes and dislikes. The Ideal is only for those who want it. Character cannot possibly appeal by way of generalisation; it is essentially individual and particular; yet the charm and interest in Character is universally recognised. It is, indeed, far more consistently sought for than is Beauty. On the lines of our arguments regarding the Beauty Sense, Character, when we respond to its appeal, has a claim to be considered Beauty. But Character would not appeal at all if it did not strike some chord in our consciousness, or touch some deeply buried experience.

Few things in Art go so straight to our inner knowledge as do the portraits of Holbein (1497-1543)—even those of least prepossessing appearance. It is not because they are curious (the particular) but because we feel them to be true (the general) far more true than the artistic generalisations and idealisations of Reynolds, Kneller, Lely and others.

Holbein is both realistic and literal, yet his drawing of a mouth can take us further than could the mouth of the person-

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age represented. We do not stop at saying, "such was this man's mouth." We say, "This is a mouth I have often seen and know well." Thus it becomes the quintessence of all mouths of its kind. We arrive at generality, and we are concerned in our thoughts more with the type of mouth than with the particular mouth. If it were one very extraordinary and peculiar, we should not feel anything beyond a mild curiosity about it, tinged with a little repulsion. We are able to see the ideal in the real of one of Holbein's portraits, because of the *feeling* with which the artist offered its natural truths to us, enabling us to see the general and universal in those truths—the part of the man that is also part of ourselves. This is precisely the same generality of presentment that finds expression in ideal conceptions. The Madonnas of the old masters present to us the sublimity of motherhood, by traits common to all mothers. Rembrandt shows us age; Rubens the pulsating vigour of life. Their Realism is that of the type more than that of the example. The landscapists take us out of doors to watch Nature in her great and inevitable movements, her magic of light and twilight, her deep stillnesses, her crashing adjustments, where we forget the scene in thinking of the power at work in it.

The term "Realism" is so constantly in use that its connotation has become wider than Art requires. In literary criticism it is often confused with materialism. There is materialism enough and to spare in painting of that kind which in ordinary parlance is meant to be the opposite of spirituality. But an artist cannot *paint* "materialistically," though he might invent subjects in that way.

The object of the realist is first and foremost to make things look real; not by slavishly copying from Nature as the literalist does, but by using any artifice or resource to forward his object. He may secure more conviction by adopting general truths than by taking the particular truths offered by his natural model; or he may overstate a case here, and reject much matter there, in order to give point to effects too feebly shown in Nature. In a word, he wishes that his public shall have no instant's doubt as to what he shows them. Even if he painted angels and spirits his aim would be to represent

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them so convincingly that the spectators would swear they had seen real ghosts.

The literalist on his part would regard it as an indiscretion to tamper with the fixed facts presented by Nature. What he sees with his bodily eye is to him the highest truth. It is this that he reverences, and he is content with what it offers and takes it as it comes. In fact, it might be said that he takes the ore of the truth he seeks, quartz and all. The realist crushes it to extract the gold. The idealist refines it and produces from it an object of beauty.

It is, then, unnecessary to repeat that these four terms cannot with any propriety be used to classify subject-matter. It is not too much to say that the artist works on one picture under the influence of them all, responding more or less to each one as his moods dictate or his task for the moment imposes. We might, further, maintain that the spectator is also subject to each influence as he takes it from the artist, for, as Holbein has shown, it is easy to contemplate a work from the point of view of literalism and then find it idealistic.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUBJECT - MATTER

**I**N a former chapter the inseparability of Form and Content was emphasised ; but these two factors must nevertheless be separately discussed, and we now shall deal with that aspect of Content which is to a great extent detachable from technical considerations ; namely, the Subject-matter or theme of a Work of Art.

Without claiming to deal with every possible subject, we conveniently assume that pictures can be roughly classified into Religious, Allegorical, Historical, Genre (which practically means domestic), Anecdotic, Still life, Animal, Architectural, and so forth. Then there are the two great classes of Portraiture and Pure Landscape. Landscape stands apart from all the others, although they may include landscape settings and although landscape itself may include figures, animals, and buildings. Sea pictures are classified with landscape.

### RELIGIOUS ART

Two centuries ago or more pictures dealing with religious themes far outnumbered any other class ; for those themes were the chief incentive during nearly two thousand years. If however, we include the factors of plastic art and paganism we are taken back many millenniums. The recently excavated images from Mesopotamia—the bull in soapstone being credited with the greatest antiquity in the world—owe their origin to religious incentive.

Religion was the cradle of Art. In ages farther off than the mind can apprehend, when man had at last emerged from his brute ancestry and become *homo sapiens*, the material power due to co-operation of brain and muscle, resourceful as it must have been, could not meet every need. Reason brought man something beyond animal cunning : it brought glimmerings

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of hope and fear. Groping among the experiences of his observation, it gave rise to superstitious imaginings. Thus in his fight with natural forces man saw himself a victim of powers that could not wholly be conquered by strength and endurance. The very sun could be tyrant as well as friend. Cold, tempest, drought, were agencies to dread. In the waters, the swamps, the chasms, there lurked life risks. Famine and thirst were constant threats. Inevitably, this antagonism was interpreted as ill-will inherent in natural phenomena; and as inevitably, those phenomena became personifications—superior powers to be placated and propitiated. What other way could primitive man devise for propitiation than by offering the very things he himself valued?

Since these higher powers were known only as immaterial agencies, obviously unable to consume what was offered them, it became possible to deal with them in ways different from ways usual with the suppliant's fellow-men and the wild things about him. It was this difference that awoke Art. It was a difference which generated a belief in the miraculous. Man lived now in two worlds, as it were, in one of which no natural laws, as he knew them, operated. Art was the medium between these two existences, material and spiritual respectively. He might offer animals of the chase when he had them, but in time of famine he could as effectively offer the mere representations of them. The high powers would understand. If he broke a leg, or poisoned a hand, an image of a leg or a hand would convey his desire for a cure. And because the deities were but figments of his own brain, he could import whatever meaning he chose into the symbols he offered.

In due course symbols alone would meet every case, and a ritual would necessarily have grown up with their systematic use, giving force and spiritual emphasis to every kind of supplication.

When worship became organised for groups and tribes, it made wider demands. Caves and groves were appropriated to religious observance, and ritual certainly must have kept pace in elaboration. In all these progressions Art was in demand; not only in the shaping of offerings, but in votive decoration and ceremonial vesture. In certain caves of France

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and Spain, where the walls reveal paintings, and the deposits have yielded incised drawings upon horn and bone, of amazingly accurate representations of animal life, we have evidence that in the "reindeer period" or quaternary epoch men were gifted with powers of draughtsmanship infinitely surpassing the skill of modern savage peoples, and, indeed, beyond the average untrained hand of a cultured person to-day. It is believed that these paintings and carvings were not executed for amusement or to decorate a domestic retreat, but that they had the more serious significance of a means for establishing relationship with deities. The animals represented are reindeer, bison, mammoth, goat, horse, stag, boar, and salmon; creatures which were necessities for food, hide, sinew, and horn. The human figure does not appear. Moreover, the paintings occur in deep recesses where no daylight reaches, so that the paintings must have been seen as well as executed by artificial light. These considerations strengthen the hypothesis of a sacerdotal purpose.

The remarkable point about these relics of an advanced Art ten or twelve thousand years before the Christian Era, is that there exists no later example that would connect them with a subsequent period. A change of climate seems to have obliterated the reindeer-age life, and Art had to start again sporadically. When and where it did its merit lacked altogether the fine sense of proportion and the acute observation that quaternary Art reveals.

Megalithic remains likewise point to religion as an impulse in temple and altar building as well as in the erection of tombs and cenotaphs. Stonehenge, Avebury, the cromlechs and dolmens, the stones of Carnac and other relics in Europe attest the power that a superstitious religion exerted over labour prodigiously exercised. But though architectural plan seems to have been developed by sun-worship, there does not appear in all these ages anything that could be admired as a work of art as are the quaternary relics.

All primitive religions are safeguards for present and future life; they have no concern with historic deities who have achieved great acts and retired to a heaven, as in the Greek and Christian religions and their derivatives. The Egyptian gods

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were servile slaves of perpetual tasks which had neither beginning nor end. They were "theriomorphic"—partly animal in form—and their earliest images, found in tombs, bespeak their service in the future life of man. A more developed art, but one not less inexorably prescribed by tradition occurs in the Dynastic periods of Egypt; but here the beast element is equally evident, and implies the original protection solicited by devotees against injury wrought by beasts, in the way already discussed. The pharaoh was the supreme being next to the gods, and Egyptian Art was used as much for the glorification of the pharaoh as for the gods themselves. In many early civilisations kingship and godship were practically inseparable. The earliest known buildings were palaces and temples, too. Here we see the difference between Egyptian and Hellenic ideas. Greek sculpture is wholly commemorative, dramatically recording the conquests of the past. The Egyptian prince glorified himself only.

As the after life was the chief concern of Egyptian religion it was necessary to provide for the material comfort of persons when they died. The tombs were thus elaborated to the utmost limit possible to the survivors, and contained representations of heaps of food and of the occupations which the defunct would engage in if he came through judgment successfully. He was embalmed in order that his body might receive again his soul (Ba) and the Ka, which was his "double." Statues were erected as a help for Ka's recognition of the mummy. In the tomb were placed sculptured figures representing the domestic tasks: grinding corn, kneading bread, and so forth, in continuous provision for the dead; and these exhibit knowledge and skill in realistic portrayal of action which have made them veritable examples of Art, utterly different from the conventionalised figures of ceremonious purport more popularly familiar. The latter are stiff and immovable, but the tomb representations are remarkable for action and movement. This curious peep into the plastic skill of a people whose hands were tied by tradition is evidence of the all-absorbing cult of material provision for a life beyond the grave. The figures portrayed are working vigorously for the welfare of the defunct and are not sublimated into abstractions



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as are the representations of the gods and pharaohs. Religion it is claimed, is likewise responsible for the truly wonderful examples of Egyptian portraiture: a branch of Art removed entirely from the generalisations of Egyptian tradition. The aim of portraiture was the recognition of the dead by their souls, or reanimating Ka, and to this end it carried individuality to a point not surpassed by any Art of following centuries.

Assyrian and Babylonian religions differed from the Egyptians in maintaining a human predominance in the images of its gods. There was no supreme concern for life after death as in Egypt and therefore no funerary Art and no elaborate tombs. Their gods were human figures distinguished only by symbolic attributes.

But dynastic Art, for the glorification of rulers, characterises the monuments of Assyria, and the dynastic idea being semi-religious must be held to derive from the same protection-seeking source as that of primordial worship. The Assyrian was monotheistic in tendency; a fact which strongly influenced the Hebrew religion and brought it to absolute monotheism. The Hebrews, however, went further from the polytheism of the Egyptians than did the Babylonians, and in their comparative disregard of a future life they prohibited all images of gods. It is for this reason that a specifically Hebrew Art is unknown in history.

Contemporary with the Egyptian, there was a civilisation flourishing in the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean in 3000 B.C. It ceased from sudden violent causes a thousand years later. We know it by the various names Cretan, Mycenaean, Minoan and Ægean. Symbolism was so completely the manifestation of the Cretan religion that the presence of its gods was frequently indicated by an empty throne. Such a method would seem to be nearer to the Hebrew abstraction than even to the symbolical differentiations of Babylon. There are more demons than gods in the relics so far unearthed, and they are anthropomorphic mixtures. In the case of the Minotaur himself, we have the widely known link between the Minoan tradition and that of the Greek which followed it. The Minotaur with his man's figure and bull's head is not of Greek origin, and is the only case in the Grecian mythology of

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this kind ; all other inferior beings having human heads on animal bodies. Does not this fact point to the higher level of the Greek mind ? Fauns, satyrs, and other creatures claim kinship with men ; their actions regulated by human brains ; but the Minotaur, with his beast's head, implies non-human thought and action. He is a true monster.

The religion of the Greeks is furnished with a more complete mythology than that of the civilisations already dealt with. Its deities were anthropomorphic and their existence was established by the Homeric poems in which they appear as crystallisations of popular traditions. But they differ widely from those conceived by other nations in being human in their minds and bodies, and also in the fact that their protective or vindictive activities are confined to the heroes of an age long past. They do not, as did the Egyptian deities, concern themselves with the future existence of their devotees. The Greeks lived in the present and for the present, with the past as inspiring example. Death, to them, was a state to be avoided because it meant nothing but an everlasting and intolerable cessation of life and its pleasures. Their Hades was a place of regretful idleness except in the case of a few imposed punishments. Their heaven was even more indefinite.

The humanisation of the deities went hand in hand with a similar humanisation of their qualities. The earliest discovered sculptures were crude and small and of a votive character, obviously intended to secure benefits from deities so far unrepresented. But the idol appeared in due course and once that stage was reached, artistic skill quickly invested it with naturalistic form, and the temple followed. The development of the representation of the god from the rude idol to the august Phidian image was due entirely to the astounding advance of Greek Art, which in its rejection of all inspiration but that of natural beauty, rapidly achieved the representation of ideal humanity.

There are no temples in the earliest Homeric stanzas, but only, it is maintained, in the later additions to the Homeric narrative.\* The temple arose when the statue of the god had developed on the lines of art to a point where an abiding place

\* Andrew Lang in "The World of Homer," throws doubt on this argument

became necessary for it. The first rude images were worshipped in groves and hollows where nothing but an altar symbolised a god's presence. The difference between the Greek temple and the immense structures of Egypt and Assyria lay in the fact that the former was a dwelling-house for the humanised god rather than a god's palace built to overawe, and to this end covered with incisions and reliefs to the glorification of its divine occupant. The decorations of the Greek temple consisted of sculptures in pediment, metopes, and friezes only. They had no supplicatory purport whatever, but dealt with mythological episodes in the career of gods and heroes having no connection with the building's divine occupant. The decorative themes were oft-repeated subjects serving merely as embellishment, and already common in the vases and other ornamented articles. This practice was the outcome of the Greek love for narration. The scenes were always those of action, and each episode might be quite unconnected with its fellows. But at the dawn of the supreme era, the fifth century B.C., the episodes assumed the value of a series relating to one deity or hero. One striking example of such continuity is seen in the Panathenaic procession of the Parthenon frieze.

It was this emancipation from a strict and unhuman tradition of its gods such as characterised Egyptian mythology that allowed the Greek the freedom of form upon which his Art advanced. His desire was to represent his gods and goddesses in the most beautiful guise he could conceive, and that was the perfection of human characteristics. The time came, however, when this humanisation brought its own derogatory aspects, for when the Hellenistic realism of human traits had made men of the gods, their godship failed. Repudiation by the philosophers intervened, although the less thoughtful of the masses continued to believe in the efficacy of the deities of which the ruder images were still revered.

Since Roman Art was demonstrably an extension of Greek Art the religious influences that fostered it are not so obviously traced as in the art of other civilisations. The Romans, in fact, were more concerned with military and civil affairs than with spiritual considerations. They accepted the inevitable and harboured various forms of religion practised contem-

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poraneously by immigrant communities whose existence in the Empire was due to widespread conquests and a centralised administration.

By the time of Constantine direct religious inspiration had been diluted so much by the decorative use of imported Greek myths, methods, and manners, that Art proceeded on a path of luxurious and commemorative purposes without any regard to the future beyond that implied in imperialism. The funerary Art produced exact portraits of deceased persons—not, as in the Egyptian idea, to make identification easy in reincarnation, but simply to record the material facts of the likeness and career of the defunct.

Enough has been said to emphasise the point that all national or racial Art had its origins in religious needs; and this applies, of course, to the countries of Asia equally with those of Europe. But as we are treating exclusively of Western Art, we pass over the important developments of Buddhism and other Oriental religions and come next to Christianity, which established itself under Roman dominion.

Among the older peoples the Hebrews stood apart by their belief in the coming of a Messiah—a deliverer who would bring the consolations of freedom and ample recompense for centuries of oppression and slavery. The hope, in its delayed fulfilment, duplicated its objective, adding to a political expectation a spiritual creed. And in the secondary form it appealed to all who were seeking something of promise beyond the meagre rewards of a struggling life. The Messianic creed, therefore, made proselytes. Further, the prophecies of the Hebrew scriptures afforded a congenial soil for the sublimated creed of a Second Coming. Christianity came and conquered, for its humanitarian appeal was irresistible. No former religion had imposed charity and mercy. Never before had a duty to one's neighbour been implied in a duty towards God.

But the Hebraic foundation involved a difficulty in relation to Art, since the outstanding rule of the Hebrew religion had always been an inexorable prohibition of the graven image. Yet Christianity sought to spread in the Græco-Roman communities whose Art offered a most desirable means of expres-

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sion. Owing to the fact that the earliest proselytes were among the Judæo-Hellenic races, the first expressions of Christian Art avoided the representation of the human figure. In the subterranean places of worship, primitive Christian Art was confined to decorative motives of plant and animal life ; and it was by slow degrees that the human figure crept into these motives under the pretext of symbolism that was not offered as representation. Moreover, the medium of representation was then painting not sculpture.

The symbolism and allegory was designed to affect the worshipper in his aspirations towards a life beyond death ; the reward of the believer. When Christianity had at last broken from Hebraism and its freedom in art motives was established, the catacomb paintings took the form of Old Testament episodes which were little more than the figures of Noah, Moses, Jonah and similar characters of Holy Writ. They promised to the devotee by implication the divine protection that the figures were depicted as having merited and received. New Testament episodes had not yet appeared. The reason advanced for this is that a representation of Christ would have lessened the purely allegorical or symbolical nature of a theme, causing it to become too distinctly a narrative representation. The Art was restrained to the utmost simplicity, in marked contrast to the crowded and elaborate compositions of contemporary Roman sarcophagi. But it was, of course, utterly pagan in character, borrowing its designs from classic tradition and inevitably repeating the style and manner of the Greek Art upon which it was founded. When, in the second century, Christian Art, no longer confined to wall-space, appeared upon sarcophagi, episodes of the New Testament were combined with those from the Old. Each was simply designed, but the subjects were many, and together amply covered the available space.

As time went on, however, the symbolical content of the decorations of Christian Art gave way more and more to the narrative. Churches succeeded the hidden retreats of the devout. Church furniture, doors, pulpits, the codices—those highly illuminated transcripts of the gospels—and other objects capable of decoration, were ornamented with con-

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tinuous illustrations of Biblical subjects ; and mosaics upon the walls likewise embodied narrative decoration.

But all these decorative and narrative picturings wrought in the devotee's mind that primitive anxiety for divine protection which is the fundamental of religious Art. The image of the Deity when it appeared was regarded in a personal relationship with the beholder, not as a character in a scene. This was the beginning of a revived iconolatry. From the condition of a participator in historical episode, the Divine figure came to possess the attributes of a god of the present having direct and protective relationship with the beholder, and this aspect was expressed by an absence of action and a front-view representation, evoking reverence and supplication. In the Greek section of the Church this attitude developed into an image cult. Form and realisation deteriorated into rigidity and convention, as the mosaics of Byzantine Art witness. Even where a company of figures is depicted, each and all stand four-square to the spectator in stiff attitudes with eyes looking straight out before them. Draperies are no longer folded in the beautiful lines of the sarcophagi, but drop flat and unmodelled. Beauty thus banished, naturalism became in the end entirely overpowered by a conventional incompetence.

This deplorable relapse to a primitive worship-idea and to an archaic ineptitude lasted unbroken in the Eastern or Greek Church, where religious Art has continued moribund. In Constantinople a fanatical protest against iconolatry found effect in vast destruction of images by the "Iconoclasts," whose suppression was finally effected in the year 850. The dissension caused an exodus of Byzantine artists who brought their work to the countries of Italy and France, already ripe to receive it by reason of the commercial intercommunications between them and Constantinople.

But until the thirteenth century the vaunted magnificence of emperors and courts of Constantinople was little more than luxurious barbarism in which gold was the chief element. Art remained at zero in the Church, though secular minor arts flickered with some survival of the Ancient Greek flame of beauty in Nature. The sculptures of Nicolo Pisano (died 1266) were inspired by antique naturalism. More significantly, the

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painter Duccio (1255-1319) turned from the iconolatrous postures of the mosaics, and designed pictures in which figures had mutual relationships, natural action, and human expression. A more marked revolt from Byzantine tradition was made by Giotto (died 1336). Though he is the pioneer of the Florentine School, in which his numerous disciples carried on the eager pursuit of naturalism, yet this departure into the fields of life and Nature, whilst still adhering to religious subject-matter, was successfully maintained more by the skill of Masaccio (1401-1428) than that of any other.

At the end of the fourteenth century intellectual life was centred in Paris. The popes held court at Avignon, not at Rome, and Italian sculptors had long since been introduced to undertake ecclesiastical work. Their influence spread into Flanders, then united with Burgundy. Illuminated missals and altar-pieces were painted by the Flemings with a grip of realism hitherto unsurpassed, and at the beginning of the fifteenth century Flanders was in advance of Italy. Flemish works were collected by Italians, who sent pupils to the Low Countries.

Perhaps one of the greatest stumbling-blocks to rational appreciation of early work is its disregard of the Unities of time and place. It frequently represents one person occupied differently in two or more parts of the same picture, wherein all is nevertheless painted with an evident striving after realism; everything material hanging together logically enough. For example, a saint may be in his chamber devoutly reading; yet we see, at the same time, the street outside where the same saint may be working a miracle, or suffering a martyr's death.

It is strange to think that the zeal to tell a complete story could thus overcome a reasoning objection to obvious impossibilities. But the truth is that such pictures took the place of books to the unlettered, serving the purpose of a sort of "Lives of the Saints" for some, whilst filling the need of pictures or ecclesiastical adornment for others.

This realism, hand in hand with an outrage of the Unities, is simply a proof that the demand for "illustration" was too strong for the sense of congruity. In some cases, however, the

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anomaly was overcome by framing or cutting-off the different episodes from each other on the same panel.

Sig. Della Seta, in "Religion and Art," points out that Christian art, having emerged from iconolatry, assumes at this point the character which Greek Art had borne in becoming narrative and decorative. We may admit that in the numerous cases where the lives of the Saints furnish episodes narration is certainly the intention; but we can hardly overlook the fact that the theme most constantly occurring in Art during the five centuries—the thirteenth to the seventeenth, which Sig. Della Seta sees parallel to the five great centuries of Greek Art—was the theme of the Madonna. Nobody can believe that the treatment of this theme was ever narrative in intent. On the contrary, it follows closely the lines of Byzantine design; and even with Botticelli (1444-1510), Leonardo and Raphael the representation can by no means be said to be that of an episode in the life of the Virgin. From Duccio to Tiepolo (1696-1770) the Virgin and Child are, more often than not, "enthroned" or otherwise lifted from the mundane plane of the countless "Births," "Deaths," "Nativities" and "Flights" where the northern painters more frequently placed them. Sig. Della Seta himself says, "When there arose a new religion, Christianity, whose force lay in the group of the family, the cult of Isis and Horus decayed, being overcome by a superior conception. It had prepared the path but fell half way." \* The path had, indeed, been prepared so well that the popes found expediency in remaining upon it, until the Reformation caused a violent departure.

What the Reformation did for Art in Holland will shortly be seen: what it did for Art in Spain and Italy was to cause the setting up of counter-attractions having a sensuous appeal against the ascetic austerities that were proselytising the Church's ranks. The Jesuits embarked on a policy of making Art serve the purpose of a lure by opposing the staid and decorous simplicity of Protestantism with more grandeur than ever—lavish display of carving, painting and gilding. It is a style known both as the "Jesuit" style and the "baroque" style—the latter in its subsequent application to secular things chiefly.

\* "Religion and Art," p. 112.



Continuously, Biblical themes have inspired painters from time to time up to our own day, though with little application to ecclesiastical ends. The Dutchman, Honthorst (1590-1656), who worked for the most part in Rome and for some time in England, painted pictures for churches without surrendering his national predilections. His "Christ before Pilate" exhibits not only a masterly seizure of the dramatic aspect of the episode, but remarkably admirable characterisation. The Christ is manly, dignified, and pathetic, whilst utterly free from the sentimentalism that usually appears in such subjects, especially at the hands of later Italians. But Honthorst was famous for dealing with problems of light, and naturally gave the scene something of the interest of a genre subject. I know of no other example of religious genre—not counting absolute illustrations. The lighting, most skilfully and elaborately worked out, proclaims the Netherlandish parentage of the picture.

The modern religious picture rarely rises to the height of sublimity that the old religious pictures reached. In the early days of painting the Church commissioned the best artists it could find to decorate its places of worship with mosaics, frescoes, altar-pieces and other devotional works. Though popes and bishops vied with each other in adorning and glorifying the sacred edifices of which they had charge, and perhaps did so in some cases in a spirit of vanity, yet the feeling of devotion was paramount in all but the lower-grade work. Great Art tells here as everywhere. Only the greatest can add that sublimity which silences and chastens every kind of spectator.

In recent years the pictures of Holman Hunt (1827-1910) take the highest place in devotional feeling and beauty of presentment. They are well known enough to dispense with further mention beyond the regret that they are not permanently represented in Trafalgar Square in place of such canvases as the baroque things which they surpass in every respect. The reputation of Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893) is, happily, honoured in this way. His "Christ washing Peter's Feet" is a work of fine feeling and accomplishment, especially as regards the figure of Peter, which is a psycho-



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CHRIST BEFORE PHARISES  
HONTHORST



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logical triumph, though that of Christ lacks dignity and distinction. In this work we see a trait that appears in all this painter's work—a constant leaning towards archaisms. The crowding of the heads along the upper edge of the picture, and the obvious want of relationship between their figures and the height of the table, is one of those affectations of mediævalism that classes him with the Pre-Raphaelite Brethren. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882) shows a purer motive in his ingenuous “*Ecce Ancilla Domini.*”

## THE CLASSICAL HERITAGE

Although Classicism had its origin in religion, its importance as a world influence rests in reality upon the perfection of its art, which not only ennobled the deities of its early epochs but immortalised the myths of its heroes. The classic “hero” was more than a kind of superman: he had eugenic credentials, boasting as he did of deity parentage on one side or the other. The heroes (and heroines also for that matter) have supplied legendary themes of a kind that has always proved irresistible. Together with the beings of lower degree—the nymphs, fauns, and other numerous personifications, they fill the same place in the continuous epic as the saints and martyrs do in the story of Christianity. But there is this difference: the mythology of Homer and Hesiod, amplified as it was by Greek and Roman of more historic periods, has survived by its appeal to the primitive within us, conditioned as it is by the inevitable worship of the Beautiful in human form. However scandalous and mean the Olympians show themselves to be, we know that they are unbelievably beautiful and we forgive them. With much more to boast of ethically, Christian heroes have no such ravishments.

If we ask why a pack of impossible stories about mythical beings should survive through three thousand years, the last of those years being opposed in every conceivable way to the spirit of those stories, we can hear no answer but in the far-off claims of Phidias and Praxiteles. They and their compeers gave such plastic form to the *dramatis personæ* of the epics as inspired the poets who followed to make tragedies of isolated episodes. That plastic ideal is—always must have been—inseparable from

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the poetic realisation. It must have played its part in the Alexandrian refurbishing of the Iliad and the Odyssey. Without this sublimation in mental vision would the names and deeds we revere have been with us to-day whilst those of the East and the North are scarcely known by a few, and those of the West not at all? Was it not when Art sank to its deepest lethargy that Homer was all but dead and buried, only to be born again when Art revived? The literary say that the Renaissance commenced with a re-study of classical books: the artistic have a right to say that classic remains were always above ground calling whoever would back from Roman organisation and Byzantine licence to the glorious ingenuousness of Greek antiquity and the supreme literature and art of its heyday.

Other countries have their myths—folk-lore of the soil: Greece alone has clothed her legends in the glorious robe of the arts for all time.

After the thirteenth century the education of the learned was classical; there was nothing else to learn (except the lives of the Christian Saints) until literature increased by means of the printing press. History itself was classical and involved in myth; Science was but a fly in the amber of necromancy; and travel but the foolhardiness of intrepid spirits as yet scarcely recorded. Thus those who had not sufficient in the present sought increase in the past. Highborn ladies spoke and wrote Greek and Latin, and anybody of high position boasted some sort of classical scholarship. Thus it is that Greek story, in spite of the ever-growing indigenous legend, in spite of the encouragement to imagination offered by the novellino, the romance, the ballad, the novel, and the general output of the Press, has proved an inexhaustible treasure-house from which the arts have drawn their wealth throughout the centuries. The combined genius of Homer and Phidias is foundation, pillar, and coping for the structure of a mythology that could have proved immortal by no other agency.

Classicism has been assailed on all sides; as Paganism by the Christian religion; by the Gothic in architecture; by the Vernacular in letters; by the Romantic in verse; by the Domestic in painting; in latter days by the Industrial in



THE NINE MUSES  
TINTORRETTA



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education ; and by many or all where these fields merge. But never since the Renaissance has Classicism failed to win and hold allegiance. Its own literature must be almost the widest in the world, for reprints and commentaries still appear. Troy is still a name to conjure with. Excavations still tap the treasure of enthusiasts, whilst growing knowledge intensifies universal interest.

Is it any wonder that next to religion in painting, the stories of Homer and his satellites provide the greatest amount of subject-matter for pictures ? The Italians painted religion for the Church, and the classics for the ducal families.

When Claude was producing his golden dreams, he had to put either religious or classical stuffing into them to make them acceptable to his patrons. Titian had previously decoyed his august clients by unmistakable lure in the form of Venuses, Danaë's, and so forth. Hellenism had become a *carte blanche* for bodily beauty, or at least for seductiveness. What a painter could not do with a Biblical scene he took licence for in a classical. Perhaps the most severely artistic in motive of them all was Tintoretto; and England owns two of his finest works: "The Origin of the Milky Way," in the National Gallery, and "The Nine Muses," at Hampton Court. The latter is the finer in design. The massing of the centre group and the bold serpentine diagonal they make is truly a masterly feature. All the figures are individually interesting in their varied posing. The nearer Muses on the right and below, combine in the most harmonious lines to enclose the inner group. When one thinks of the task of arranging eighteen arms and eighteen legs, to say nothing of the bodies, in so compact a composition, the assurance of the supreme power of the painter crowns all criticism. In colour the work is broad and harmonious ; its lights gleaming, its shades transparent with reflected and errant light.

Most classical painting since the time of the Venetians has usually taken the form of illustration of historical incidents, inspired for the most part by book-learning ; though sometimes by political fanaticism, as with the French after their great Revolution. This kind of classicism is advanced as a revolt against the more natural romanticism which "will out" in



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painting because it is inherent in human nature. In turn it is revolted against by romanticism again ; by sentimentalism, humorous anecdote and other influences on a nether level. The reactions that have taken place in this see-saw manner during the last two centuries can be followed in any history of Art.

Of all those who have in modern times essayed Hellenic themes there is, to my mind, but one who was really imbued with the true Greek spirit, and that is the nineteenth-century painter, Arnold Boecklin, of Swiss birth. He looked on Nature with the eyes of an impressionable Greek. First inspired by the landscape, he painted it with a fearless romantic truth and then peopled it with fabulous beings. But he did no historical or mythical illustrating ; and in that respect his work stands apart from all that is known as classical painting. He was a mythologist. For him every rock, tree, and river had its resident genius. No one has ever realised the beings of myth as Boecklin has done. They are not fairy-tale absurdities : they are convincing possibilities. His centaurs are not half gentlemen and half thoroughbreds ; they are homogeneous, colossal, savage monsters. And how they fight ! His romantic vision was a second sight to him, taking up the tale where his physical vision had to stop. What he saw in imagination he added to what he saw with his bodily eye ; and so his figures never step out of their proper place in the picture, but in perfect harmony with the idea, add marvel to mystery and symbol to allegory.

Boecklin's colour is excessively rich, deep and pure ; and his mastery of natural light and shade resembles that of Tintoretto in its help to dramatic effect. Practically unknown in this country, his reputation rests here upon a reproduction of one of his least fine pictures, "The Isle of the Dead," which once was very popular in the shops. We await Boecklin's fit successor.

### ALLEGORY

Although, as we have seen, the methods of religious propaganda included allegorical suggestion as an active agent on the minds of devotees, there developed also a style of alle-



THE GENTLEMAN AT THE SMITHY

BOJ CUNJIN



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gorical representation directed less to worship than to ethics ; and in times later still, more directed to fancy and amusement than to ethics.

All creative impulses which aim at guiding the mind towards abstract ideas find expression in Allegory, the function of which is to convey meaning by the use of symbols. Images of the gods of antiquity were, in a measure, symbols. They stood for something in men's minds. For example, the god Dionysus primarily symbolised to the Ancient Greek the force governing hopes and fears for the vintage.

A rather remarkable instance of allegory in classic sculpture occurs in the Greek Anthology. A statue representing Occasion is addressed by an onlooker : " Who and whence was thy sculptor ? From Sicyon. His name ? Lisippus. And who art thou ? Occasion, the all-subduer. Why dost thou tread on thy tip-toe ? I am ever running. Why hast thou wings twynatured on thy feet ? I fleet on the wings of the wind. Why dost thou bear a razor in thy right hand ? To show to men that I am keener than the keenest edge. And thy hair, why grows it in front ? For him that meets me to seize. And why is the back of thy head bald ? Because none may catch me from behind, howsoe'er he desire it, when once my winged feet have darted past him. Why did the sculptor fashion thee ? For thy sake, stranger, and set me up for a warning in the entry."

Mythology, and particularly classical mythology, provided liberal material for allegorical subject-matter because of its ample personification of the forces and factors of life. The artists of the Renaissance eagerly availed themselves of the pictorial possibilities of these personifications, adding to the array of Greek and Roman characters others to typify any virtue, vice, emotion, passion, art, or industry for which a symbol was wanted. Religious motives and allegorical methods went, not exactly hand in hand, but side by side, in the history of Art, as the paintings of Michelangelo, to take no further examples, amply reveal. Allegory, being capable of wide application in all grades of thought and belief, has maintained its power, and will certainly continue to maintain it as long as Art is practised. To-day it is everywhere ; in the deco-

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rative statuary of our buildings, in our monuments, and even in our commercial badges, as well as perennially in painting.

The great strength of Allegory is that it is impersonal. It is able to deal with particular episodes and particular people in a general manner, rising above the commonplaces of life. In painting it leaves actual description to historical and *genre* pictures and seeks always to give the *spirit* rather than the *letter*. Its weakness is that in the hands of mediocre artists it easily slips into banality. This is evidenced by the thousands of hooded weeping females sculptured on nineteenth-century tombs. In lighter moods, however, even its doubtful successes offend far less. Dancing halls, restaurants, theatres, have all revelled in allegorical decoration in the past and have proved its suitability to minister to the mood of joy and luxury upon which such places thrive. Civic halls and educational establishments have found equally fitting embellishment in wall-painting and sculpture designed to set forth by emblematical figures the aims and ideals of the work for which the buildings were destined.

It will have been noticed that allegorical art concerns itself largely with flowing or so-called classical draperies and the nude figure. No doubt these styles are to some extent an heirloom from Ancient Greek Art; but Allegory itself is no more directly concerned with Ancient Greece than with Chicago. It is a convention of all times and all climes. The fact is that the kind of clothing which practically nobody wears in real life to-day is for us the best style of raiment in which to clothe figures that do not represent particular men but typify mankind generally. Moreover, the flowing robes that seem to resemble the Greek "chiton" and "himation," are in reality seldom true enough to those antique garments to satisfy a passably efficient classical scholar, much less an expert antiquarian. The fitness of flowing garments for allegorical purposes is due not only to the remoteness from the ordinary as already stated, but to the facility with which their fabric follows the form of the body and flows into lines that are pleasurable to the sight. They are popular on this account to the amateur who produces "tableaux" and dresses "pageants."

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The nude in allegorical painting and sculpture is adopted for similar reasons. It generalises the figure into a symbol of mankind, thus avoiding any necessity to represent particular personages. In this it goes further even than the draped figure. Those artists who have made the figure a special study have a reverence and admiration for it far beyond that which is felt by the ordinary person. Its lines and masses and its colour are for them a never-ending stimulation to artistic effort. The resources of the figure in design are as inexhaustible as its charms. It does not follow, however, that all nude figures in Art are admirable as human bodies considered apart from their place in a design. Incapacity of the artist to attain to its own ideals in this respect may often be in evidence. The point of view that the student should take in considering allegorical works is one of Content. Does the figure express the message that the artist wishes to convey? Does it with conviction play its part in the allegory? There are nudes in early works that will raise an excusable smile; but we must not let our ideas of what is due to Form cloud and stultify those which are due to Content.

Because those incomparable sculptors of Ancient Greece—Phidias, Praxiteles, Scopas, Lysippus—evolved types of beauty which no modern has ever been able to surpass, we must not demand of Art that it shall never depart from the antique canon. We should reject all development in so doing. The Ancient Greek type was one for gods and goddesses, heroes and athletes. In Athens beauty for beauty's sake was the prime impulse. Metaphysical and poetical as thought was at that time, the representation of human emotion was subordinated in the finest period of sculpture to serenity and the nobility of restraint. Feeling shone through the perfect form, but bodily beauty was never allowed to surrender its supremacy. Greek perfection has often been approached since; but in the main, Gothic, Renaissance, and Modern Art have placed feeling, life, passion, and emotion above the representation of an accepted type of beauty.

The striving after classic ideals resulted in a rather dreary waste of banalities in the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Classicism was a fashion; and it became a relief to later

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art-lovers to turn from the straddling and pompous heroes of that epoch to the more sincere expression of the Italians of the Renaissance, who, though inheriting the ideals of the Ancients, imbued them with their own spirit of life and its richnesses.

It is to this spiritual significance of the figure that enthusiasms are chiefly directed in these days. The lines, masses, and modelling which the nude and the draped figure supply are a sufficient medium to express an artist's message. It is not necessary that the representation of the flesh shall convincingly portray the individual characteristics of the person who acted as model, or even the artist's ideal of the human physique.

We may gain a good idea of the unrealistic treatment of the figure, draped or undraped, in Allegory by contemplating the works of G. F. Watts (1817-1904), which may be seen at the Tate Gallery. In "Love and Life" for instance, the beautifully and sensitively drawn figure of the girl typifying Life shows how abstractly the thing can be done, and how far more eloquently a psychological message can be conveyed by this method than by the concreteness of literal body-painting. But Watts employed the draped figure with equal effectiveness, using robes that did not claim to be of any particular date or country.

Whilst we are speaking of Watts, we may take him also as an outstanding example of the decadence of a true art mission by reason of the didactic obsession. Watts was early in his career a powerful, virile painter. By degrees his desire to preach overcame his æsthetic feeling and the lesson to be taught took precedence of everything else. He began to sacrifice the beauties of Art to the subject-matter of his canvases; and that subject-matter, from being poetical allegories easily read, like Love leading Life up the rocky ascents, and Hope eagerly listening to the music of the only string remaining upon her harp—from such poetical simplicities, it proceeded to more abstruse and finally riddle-like sermons in paint of which the meaning is as elusive as the beauty which the form should have held. Watts thus proved once more the truth that really never wanted proof, namely, that Art must retain its own expression of ethics, morals, politics, history, poetry, or anything else.

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Art is independent of all these things even while it deals with them. A written sermon can be a work of art—Donne's are valued upon that account. In such a case the better the art the more surely the message of the sermon will find its hearer.

In the days of the past, when ideas were more of a poetical cast than they are in this practical, materialistic and scientific age, Allegory tinged every art effort. In the Fine Arts it was everywhere. Even in such practical things as early maps and charts one may see their titles embellished with symbolic figures and a wealth of emblematic ornament. Highly decorative ships, lovingly designed, sail upon blank spaces representing seas which are further adorned with wondrous fishes and sea-monsters. Both ships and fishes are, judged by the scale, very many miles long—but what did that matter to the beauty-loving cartographers? The idea was to emphasise in a playful and elegant manner the fact that such a part of the map stood for the sea. This shows the spirit of the age. We could not do with it in these times, but we may regret the utilitarian conquest of the beauty and poetry that was once so constant a factor in life. It made itself felt, of course, in the pictures which represented episodes in history as well as in mythology. Thus it happened that historical painting comprised much more allegory than plain fact. The "triumphs" of kings and emperors afforded splendid material for the designs of Dürer and Burgkmair, and the canvases of the Italian painters and of Rubens. These mighty but essentially decorative compositions led the way to the more literal historical paintings that later were an embodiment of a people's pride in their national story.

## HISTORICAL PAINTING

Historical painting, not much practised in these days, became a kind of illustrative art on a large scale, used in mural painting for the decoration of national buildings and civic halls. The subject-matter of such pictures is of prime importance since their motive is largely of a commemorative nature. But this should be no excuse for a disregard of the more subtle parts of the Content as expressed by the Form. Indeed it may



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safely be said that historical paintings that are the most effective as national memorials owe more of their force and eloquence to technical rightness of design, tone, and colour, than to the mere record of events, however accurately portrayed.

It must not be forgotten that the value put upon the work which is evidently an exact reproduction of manners and customs of the past, is an antiquarian, not an artistic value. There is necessarily little antiquarian satisfaction in historical compositions that have been reconstructed by an artist living centuries after the occurrence of the incident.

Since the object of wall-paintings of a historical character is to imbue the spectator with feelings of admiration and veneration for certain heroes, or martyrs, or potentates, the value of the work will depend upon the force of the spirit rather than the correctness of the letter. But the artist, in his zeal to say all that he can of the subject-matter, has usually been tempted to use immense canvases crowded with a variety of incidents; and these incidents and the area that they cover require more time and convenience for their adequate study than is ordinarily possible to a spectator in the building where such works are situated.

The usual fate that overtakes spectacular work, therefore, is that the literary interest which was first allowed to overweight the artistic loses its force as time goes on, and then there is little left.

Another circumstance from which historical painting suffers is an ultimate falsification of its statements by the advancement of knowledge and the change of mode in thought. There are many ambitious pictures employing architecture, costume, armour, and so forth, the details of which we now know to be incorrect. That in itself would not matter much, were not the whole manner of representation so different from the manner of our own day that it appears a little ridiculous. This is the danger that lies in making elaborate and pretentious representations of manners and customs of a past age. Historical reconstructions must have a deal of dramatic intensity and emotion to lift them above these dangers.

On the other hand, the pictures that are painted of events of an artist's own time are entirely free from this drawback.





THE SURRENDER OF BREDA ["LAS LANZAS"]  
VELASQUEZ

Photo: Art Library

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They become valuable documents to succeeding generations. This is the case with "The Surrender of Breda," by Velasquez (1599-1660), which has grown in popular esteem as to be now the most famous battle picture in the world. Some say that the costumes in it are painted with an eloquent exaggeration of the difference between the Spanish and the Dutch. The painter certainly gives all the courtly grace to Spinola. The fine design shows what excellent pictorial use has been made of the lances held up in a compact body. This feature has given the work its pet name of "The Lances."

In many ages painters have represented characters in the costume of their own day although they knew these characters to have existed centuries earlier. In old work this kind of deliberate error was no doubt committed because the painter had no knowledge of any costume but that of his townsmen. It is therefore an error we can respect, for it was naïve and honest. The painters thought it better to show the clothes they knew than to invent others and pass them off as historical. We thus get the advantage of authentic data as to costume, etc., of the painter's own day. For example, representations of scriptural subjects of scenes, obviously in the Holy Land, by Italian or German artists, usually include Italian or German costumes of the painter's time. This is seen in the work of the greatest artists, and it seems impossible to suppose that ignorance was the cause in all such cases.

These anomalies may disturb the student, or at least raise his scorn, in the first instance. That is exactly the point where he must hold on in patience. The appreciation of works of art does not end in picking out errors. Probably no work of art is without errors. There is a tale of a shoemaker's apprentice who criticised adversely the painting of a buskin in the picture of a great artist, who rewarded him for his knowledge and adjusted the fault. But that little tale is no authority for concluding that the works of the great must stand or fall by material and literal standards imposed by the little specialist. The tale goes on to tell how, emboldened by his success, the shoemaker suggested further adjustments in matters not within the range of shoemaking, and was kicked out for his pains.

Naturally it is in matters that are familiar knowledge to the

critic, great or small, that his response to works of art is most ready. But he should concern himself rather to reach the painter's level of all the other things of which he is ignorant ; not to scorn the whole because of some point that raises in him a supercilious smile.

But there is a matter in which the critic can find firm ground for logical objection ; it is the intentional creation of anomalies in costume and setting. In the matter of historical work there have been modern painters who have deliberately pursued a course which was obviously anomalous for them, although perfectly rational in the olden days. In the days of the early painters archæology as a scientific pursuit did not exist, and antiquarianism was as undreamed of as television. There were either clothes or no clothes at all : their own or nudity. The assumption that there was any idea of " bringing home " to the spectator the portent of the picture by force of intimate relationship is not to be held for a moment. Equally the idea that to picture St. Joseph or Ulysses in quattrocento garb was held to be quaint or funny is untenable. Yet we constantly find the perfectly natural fact advanced as a pretext for doing the same thing in modern days when a hundred times more is known about the life of the ancients than was known in the fourteenth century. To claim that a content becomes stronger by this anomalous method is as reasonable as a more recent claim that the fateful troubles of Hamlet are better appreciated by an audience when he wears a high hat.

If the arts have to fish so far and with such bait for the plaudits of the public we may conclude that the real impulse is less a desire for genuine artistic expression than mere commercial enterprise in offering novelty for novelty's sake to a public which, while well alive to the absurdity, is nevertheless pleased to be tickled by it.

The anomalous style of representation has now become frequent. It will probably gain ground until it sinks unperceived as solecism into the mass of material which modern painting has thrown into its chaotic melting pot.

That the early painters were consistent and clear-viewed is evident in all their works. To them the idea of divinity and of sanctity imposed obligations which they observed as well as

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they knew how. Possibly the Church demanded for sacred personages the conventional long robes, with all the enrichments allowed by skill and taste, in order that the characters should be separated in idea from the mundane participators in the scene. In default of accurate knowledge this was the best and most obvious way.

The question how far accuracy is demanded in a historical painting must depend entirely upon the purpose for which the work is designed. If it is destined for a public place a commemorative picture can gain but little by scrupulous accuracy of detail in costume and accoutrement ; but the case is altered when the easel picture, painted to sell, claims to record a particular historical episode. It is then an obligation on the artist's part to be as accurate as research can make him.

Where the spectator has any doubts, or can himself detect inaccuracies, his interest in the work must certainly be discounted. On the other hand, if he is interested enough in historical painting to study it at all, he will feel enhanced satisfaction in the thought that it has been executed with expert knowledge. The classical works of Alma-Tadema (1836-1912) and Poynter (1836-1919) owed something of their success to this assurance, and the same may be said of the dramatic genre of Pettie (1839-1893), Meissonier (1815-1891) and others.

## GENRE

Genre pictures have already been described as for the most part domestic. To quote the definition of Fairholt, the term comes from the Latin *genus* = a class, a kind.

" A term applied to life and manners, which, for want of a definite character, are classed together as of a certain *genre* or kind. Under this title are comprised the grave episodes of life, which are to history what a single scene is to a drama, or a lyric to an epic poem. Also comic pictures of all kinds. . . . The principal genre pictures consist of scenes of everyday life and may be classified. In taking for its subject the events of daily life, genre painting avoids religious themes as high and lasting, as well as historical subjects, which, though transitory, ought never to appear so. All the passing events of life, its characters, and aims, offer fitting subjects for genre painting."

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In itself therefore the term *genre* has evidently nothing to do with the actual incidents in the picture. It is a word which came to be applied to a *class* of pictures which, at a time when most painting was religious, became, as it were, outclassed. A name was never found for it, but it was referred to as "the class" of subject which was neither religious nor historical, otherwise *genre*.

It has been said that this class of subject-matter obtained its domestic character from religious art by the help of still-life painting. The Netherlandish painters very early showed a great aptitude for this kind of work. They introduced it into their religious pictures, and by degrees painted it for its own sake, leaving the religion out.

The complete story of the rise of genre painting begins with the Early Flemings, who were much employed by the popes at Avignon. Unlike the Italians with their heritage of classicism and their poetic predilections, the Netherlandish people were a race who regarded Art as a medium for exact representation rather than for visions. Whilst they painted the subjects required of them, they did so with all the realism of which they were capable—and it was much. Further, they satisfied their common-sense literalism by including in their pictures a deal of minute record of the things and scenes about them. Fine and searching portraitists, they exercised their skill upon the portrayal of the "donors" included among the figures of the altar-pieces with which they were commissioned; and in this and countless other ways they proved themselves to be realists of such power that Italian painters came to them as pupils, and for some time from the beginning of the fifteenth century their work surpassed that of any other nation. But when, as a result of the Reformation, the Netherlands were split into two sections, Holland became Protestant and established in 1684 her independence. For her there was henceforth an end of popish pictures. To what had always been her Netherlandish birthright, Nature and life, she turned with the ardour of emancipation. Rich and prosperous, her burghers loved an abundant life, with all its joys of the arts and pastimes of home life. Proud of their towns, their canals, their countryside, they painted what their eyes saw rather than what their







THE BANKER AND HIS WIFE  
MASSYS

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souls aspired to. Thus there arose a new class of pictures in which comely women played lutes and spinets, or sang with their musical neighbours ; in which well-to-do and comfortable men read, smoked, and talked by canal-side or at inn tables ; but in which never an angel or an apostle, a miracle or a martyrdom occurred to turn the effort aside from the artist's joy in the actual and the present.

The change had been preparing for a hundred years : its suddenness was merely official. There had always been the practicality, the sense of structure, the feeling for hardness and softness and textures, in the painting of the Low Countries. Above all, the play of light over objects had always been studied with a maturity of research far beyond that of contemporary Italians with whom the more childlike responses to colour, as such, and to emotional indeterminateness had sufficed. It was the difference between a hard-headed intellectual materialism and a sensuous spirituality.

Richard Muther, in his "*Geschichte der Malerei*," shows very ingeniously how genre grew by the Netherlandish love of still-life painting out of the religious painting which preceded it. In "*The Gold-weighers*," or "*The Banker and his Wife*" by Quinten Massys (1466-1529), which is in the Louvre, the wife turns the leaves of an illuminated book on devotion, whilst keeping her eyes upon her husband's scales. Then comes Marinus van Romerswaelen (1497-1567), with his "*Gold-changers*," a remarkably close copy of the same subject. Here the wife has her hand upon a book likewise, but this time it is an account book. In the National Gallery may be seen Marinus's "*Two Usurers*." The wonderful facial expression of these two characters will be remembered : one quite calm and unmoved and the other contorted with anguish and greed as he clutches at the gold. This version of the same theme would appear to have been derived from the Massys picture of "*The Misers*" at Bologna. It shows no vestige remaining of religious subject-matter ; but the period of these pictures was still that of Biblical subjects, and Muther sees in these usurers a possible allusion to the parable of the Unmerciful Servant. There are several repetitions of the subject.

But to limit the supreme results of Dutch genre painting to

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a development along the lines of still-life painting is both unfair and shortsighted. The Dutch were humanists to an infinitely greater extent than were the Italians ; and the merit of genre lies in its quiet and searching humanism ; not in its precise delineation of carpets and cabbages. It is founded upon a clear and responsive outlook on concrete nature : its stepping stones were portraiture and domesticity, the beauties of which appealed through effects of light and shade.

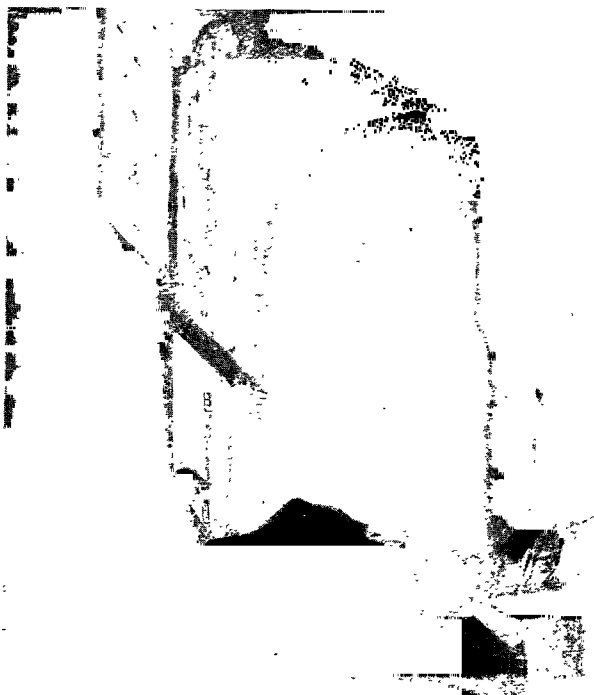
When genre was firmly established it grew to be the vehicle of exquisite feeling and æsthetic motive amongst Flemish and Dutch painters of the seventeenth century, the best known of whom are Terborch (1617-1681), Metsu (1630-1667), Vermeer (1632-1675). It is a sort of first step away from such purely literary interest as historical and anecdotal works offer. There are pictures which prove the subject-matter to be but a peg upon which the artist could hang his delight in portraying such themes as the play of light and shade, of colour, on fabrics and other surfaces, as well as the effect of daylight illumination in interiors ; a subject which the painter De Hoogh (1629-1677) made his special study.

De Hoogh stands high in the estimation of present-day critics for the merits of his out-door lighting. To me, his courtyards appear suffused with a kind of partial-eclipse illumination ; not the real joyous light of a clear bright grey day. But that he thought and strove, there is no doubt. His "Forge" is of the utmost interest in showing the difficulty he had with the glowing horse-shoe on the anvil. To make it incandescent he has reduced the tone everywhere else to the lowest possible limit, and yet the hot iron does not properly shine in the darkness. The reason is obvious. He has given it no irradiation. No picture of his evidences any observation of this phenomenon. Presumably he never looked upon Rembrandt's "Philosopher." Apart from this fault the picture is full of character, both in the figures and in the crowded accessories, all well realised as they show themselves to be when the low key is accommodated. This is a picture that would reveal excellencies in a good light : it hangs in the darkest corner of the National Gallery.

De Hoogh was a contemporary of Rembrandt (1606-1669),



THE FORGE  
DE HOOGE.



THE PHILOSOPHER  
REMBRANDT

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yet the difference in vision between them is a startling reminder of how little mere dates have to do with the facts of artistic evolution and development. In the picture called "The Philosopher" we have simply an essay in light effects. It depicts broad sunbeams coming in through the windows of the philosopher's study and striking upon the embrasures and walls. To the close student of Nature its beauties are inexhaustible, and they rest upon the keen observation of the artist, who must have revelled in the delight the painting of the subtle facts afforded him. The sunbeams themselves are scarcely noticeable as they come through the windows, which shows that the air of the room is quiet and that all the motes and dust have settled—for it is impurity or vapour in the air that makes sunbeams appear to be opaque. In this picture their brilliance is seen upon the wall they strike—a choice touch of naturalism.

But perhaps Rembrandt's "Philosopher" is less a *genre* subject than an "impression" pure and simple. There are, however, many subjects by Rembrandt, unmistakably inspired by the beauty of light and shade, which are, in reality, *genre* subjects.

## THE ANECDOTE PICTURE

It is rather difficult to draw the line between *genre* painting and the painting of anecdote. The one led directly to the other. *Genre* painting with lively action has always been a popular favourite. In the case of our English Hogarth (1697-1764) it was made the vehicle of those biting satires upon life which have made this philosopher-painter famous. Wilkie (1785-1841) told stories of village life, simple and charming. In Germany and Austria the anecdote has occupied a high place in popular approval, chiefly through the talented Schwind, Knaus, and Defregger. The best known modern example in England of this combined appeal of *genre* and anecdote is Luke Fildes' work, "The Doctor." The dramatic element was added to *genre* painting most successfully by the Scotch artist John Pettie.

But the Picture of Anecdote, more than all others, has led popular criticism astray. Its misfortune is, that whether the

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story told is a humorous one, or one of deep human interest, the sympathies of the uninitiated spectator are engaged to such an extent that he can spare no mental effort for the picture's æsthetic interest. This is true, no matter how excellently the work is done or how admirably the artistic message is conveyed. We might take as an example that well-known picture, "The Derby Day," by Frith (1819-1909), which invariably attracts larger and more lingering crowds than any other work in the National Gallery. It would scarcely be too much to say that nine-tenths of the people who examine and enjoy all the incidents of this lively picture never give a thought to anything but the life-stories of its numerous characters. Each little group of figures makes a telling episode. The mirror is held up to nature in every emotion represented. Every face is a perfect miniature portrait. The commonplaces of gesture and expression are depicted with a skill unmatched anywhere in the domain of painting. It is no wonder therefore that the public vote this their darling work. The spectator's interest is, in fact, exactly that of a person who, seated at ease in some conveyance on an actual racecourse, scans the crowds around and derives intense enjoyment from that pastime known as "watching the people." Such a person would probably have no more thoughts of Art than would his luncheon basket. And the people who look at the picture—a few experts and students excepted—are just as little affected by art influences. Frith's work was painted in this spirit. Its Form, as far as it went, was unsurpassed, but its Content was all subject-matter; the subject-matter all anecdote. Of beauty as expressed by Art there is practically nothing; and it is small wonder therefore that spectators feel no reaction of beauty upon themselves.

In seeking the deeper universal emotion, painters have turned their faces from mere anecdotal exercises and have in various ways endeavoured to direct their efforts towards regaining the old charm of Art that was practised for its own sake. The impulse is laudable enough, but it has unfortunately carried unbalanced painters away to the opposite extreme; and we have now too many artistic exercises that are not pictures at all.

We can readily see, nevertheless, the danger of being

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satiated with the literary motive of works of art. While we have no thought for anything else it is obvious we shall always be blind to the artistic charms. Often this is a great injustice to the painter. The happy scenes of village-life with which Wilkie delighted his generation, and now delights us, can boast of beauties of tone and light and shade reminiscent of the qualities in Netherlandish genre at its best. To look at his works, therefore, only to read the story is to miss half their charm.

The kind of anecdotal picture that partakes to some extent of the allegory, inasmuch as it attempts to teach a lesson, or deliver a satire, has its great exemplar in Hogarth, whose chief satire, "*Marriage à la Mode*," is in the National Collection. He laughs at the world's follies and we laugh with him. But his pictures are dramatic and free from the realism that in Frith's work drives home the story and leaves our æsthetic sense untouched. Hogarth is by far the finer artist. He imbues his scenes with a kind of idealism of the mood they convey. His use of shade and mystery is a help to the imagination. The swagger, the pathos, the absurdity of his characters are part of the artistic appeal. Caricaturist as he is, his Form is at the service of his Content, in adding point and force to his meaning.

## STILL LIFE

Reference has already been made to Still-life painting. It is only necessary to add that this class of work is chiefly a painter's own class. Nobody would expect people to be moved to emotion at the realistic representation of dead hares, onions, musical instruments, books and so forth. When pictures of this kind are admired it is certainly not for a literary interest they do not possess. They are in fact exercises in technique, and as such they have proved seductive to the best painters of all ages. Many pretty stories are told about Still Life by the early Greeks, Apelles and Parrhasius, who competed in realism. It follows therefore that it must be an excellent medium for expressing what an artist feels about the tone and colour of things as mundane as wine bottles and loaves of bread. With such subject-matter did J. B. S. Chardin



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(1699-1779) produce the work which has latterly ranked as the supreme classic in still-life painting. Certainly France has produced nothing finer of its kind. It is an impressive lesson in the power of simple truth-seeking to endow an unimaginative piece of literalism with some glamour of loftiness. It is in the story told by the broad shadows that the romance lies. Still-life work is for such possibilities excellent training for the art student, whether executive or merely appreciative. It can never, of course, rank as great art, because an art-motive of itself is not enough to make a great work ; that requires to be balanced and complemented by loftiness of idea. If the idea predominates over beauty of presentment ; or alternatively, if that beauty predominates, the work will suffer in its appeal, lacking that perfect balance of Form and Content which alone can raise it to the highest rank. Any such lack seems compensated in modern popularity of flower-pieces by the passion for floral beauty that is a characteristic of this century.

### ANIMAL PAINTING

Of animal pictures there is little to say, because what has already been advanced for anecdote, genre, and still life applies to them, in so far as they partake more or less of the characteristics of those styles. Landseer (1802-1873) excelled in the painting of animals ; but he was not guiltless in loading his subject-matter with sentimentality. His faithful dogs too often weep with human eyes : his comic ones smoke pipes or assume other human peculiarities. The artistically-minded critic most enjoys Landseer's noble animal studies, such as the Lions and "The Sleeping Bloodhound" which once enjoyed the space they deserve in the National Gallery. These works were done to please himself, not to please a public demoralised by human melodrama enacted by quadrupeds. In the handling of paint, and in the realisation of the textures of fur, Landseer may perhaps be said to have surpassed all who had gone before him. Later animal painters and sculptors have gone still further in seizing the true spirit of wild animal life and instincts. The lower creation presents a worthy field for pictorial representation in the instinctive expression by muscular action of those impulses which animals feel under stress of their own

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conditions and in their proper environment. Animal painting is at its noblest when it treats its subject-matter with propriety and its creatures with the dignity of truth to Nature.

### ARCHITECTURE AS PICTORIAL MATERIAL

Architectural pictures are not a large class, since they are produced only by artists to whom buildings appear to possess poetical moods of their own. In this respect they share attributes of pure landscape. It may be said in fact that architecture as a subject for pictures is the landscape of man's making. A few painters of the Netherlands, like Van der Heyden (1637-1712), and Berck-Heyde (1638-1698), were inspired by the streets, squares, and buildings of their picturesque towns, and that not by reason of the structure and details, which they rendered with astounding minuteness, but of the purely pictorial factors of massing, colour, light and shade, and general effect. All these qualities are seen in spite of the miraculous painting of detail. Churches, particularly their interiors, have always fascinated painters, sometimes through the serene solemn majesty of their stately walls and pillars, the deep and mellow richness of their varied illumination; sometimes, as with the Dutch, through their bright homely beauty. A later Dutchman, Bosboom (1817-1891), found in church interiors subject-matter which is remarkable for æsthetic charm.

The remains of classic temples, the Romanesque churches, and Italian palaces; the Gothic cathedrals with their airy grace—"frozen music"—the châteaux of France, the castles and houses of our own lands, have been loved and painted for their own sakes, regardless of the landscape wherein they are set. There is a peculiar pleasure in the aspect of stability and definiteness of a building seen under the transfiguring light of the sun. Its beauty is of a different nature from that of the soft and irregular aspect of fields and woods: it differs even from the austerity of rigid crags; for a building, when its structure is admirably proportioned and its members designed for the best effect, exhibits a formal beauty unseen in other arts except when they deal with architectural motives.

It is this charm of architectural beauty that causes people not only to go and see buildings, but to make pictures of them.

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Canaletto (1697-1768) and Guardi (1712-1793) both loved their Venice for its churches, palaces, and bridges. Turner, a painter of cities, adorned his views of the lagoons with their gleaming domed churches and campanili. Piranesi (1720-1778) did his finest work in the series of etchings of the architectural remains of ancient Rome, and the Dutch painted their quaint houses and tidy streets from the same delight in this fascination of architecture. It is an art almost relinquished in painting, but survives in etching to-day.

### LANDSCAPE

Landscape painting is the field in which modern art effort has shown most development and achieved the highest triumphs. In past centuries, men, as a rule, did not love the country as it is loved to-day. Civilisation was a thing yet to be exploited. Court-life, learning, and wealth kept the arts circumscribed to those classes which, on the whole, thought more of culture and science, discovery and wealth, than of Nature. The masses who were face to face with Nature every day did not regard her as a benefactress. For them she stood for toil and something from which men might escape to town life and luxury. But when industrialism had begun to canker this luxury; when the hard bones of struggle and anxiety began to show through civilisation's fair exterior, men sought for something sound to which they could turn for solace. They found Nature. The poets and philosophers who had always sung her praises won then a wider hearing. Above all, painters who had only flirted with Nature in Art, confining their devotedness to landscape backgrounds for figure-subjects, and occasional imaginative natural terrors, gradually came to love her with sweeter intimacy. Nature's ordinary scenes and ordinary moods occupied them more and more.

Writers upon Art have paid testimony to a love of Nature evinced by the works of the early Italian masters: even the primitives. But we must allow something for the prejudices of enthusiasts. It is not denied that feeling is shown in the piecemeal insertion of flowers in foregrounds, nor that invention of a sort characterises rocks and trees; but the delineation of natural objects, even when done with some obvious refer-

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ence to Nature, does not amount to landscape. In the peeps of country that occur between the figures in countless pictures of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it is scarcely possible to detect any studious or loving observation of Nature reaching anywhere near that of the earnest study given to the figure and to architecture by the same masters. The wonder is, not that they did so well in landscape, as some critics maintain, but that they did so ill, comparatively.

Landscape in the early centuries was employed it would seem as a background filling, for what it could be made to render by way of tonal relief, as in skies ; ornamental pattern as in trees ; and mere space occupation, as in rocks. The rocks were perhaps the most uninformed inventions of all natural objects, being almost invariably conventionalised impossibilities in form, colour, and texture, " evolved out of the inner consciousness " of the artists. Nevertheless, accepted for what it is, this background landscape has a charm of its own in the complete effect. It is only fair to assume that it answered its purpose inasmuch as whatever satisfied the painters probably satisfied their still less observant patrons.

It is not demonstrably right to give the credit to Giorgione (1477-1510), as some have done, for being the first to paint " landscape with figures " instead of " figures with a landscape background." Giovanni Bellini (1428-1516), to name no others, has such a claim in his " Landscape, with the Death of St. Peter, Martyr." This scene is a well-realised wood, with foreground figures comparatively small. Many continental galleries and churches possess pictures by the Early Flemings which give with more force than the average contemporary Italian picture does, the equal, if not preponderate, interest in landscape for its own sake. The two Van Eycks (1385-1441), with their famous " Adoration of the Lamb," and Rogier van der Weyden (1400-1464) all died before Giorgione was born ; and Memling (1430-1494) was forty-seven years older than he.

Exhaustiveness of detail and minuteness of execution are the popular delights of Early Flemish painting, rightly enough ; but our comments are intended to draw attention to other aspects altogether : those, in fact, which are not the outcome of a servile application of patient industry. We admire these

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works for what they reveal of larger and more inspiring truths that were evidently seen and were feelingly expressed *in spite of* the detailed and laborious methods which were the only methods in vogue at that stage of Art's development. Such methods would be almost unendurable by painters to-day—so much has human temperament changed. The real wonder of the Van Eycks, the Memlings and others is that their minuteness is saved, justified, kept in place, by a breadth of vision that secures homogeneity and makes minute accuracy a delight, not only to those who can see nothing else, but to the initiated and even to the advanced painter of to-day. Yet to such the minute accuracy is negligible beside the greater successes—the feeling for colour, the proper relation of tones, spatial sense, structural sense, and airiness. These qualities are often absent in the works of compeers and even of others who practised centuries later. When it is remembered that these works can never, never be repeated, because the world is too much changed, it is not surprising that they are valued at many times their weight in gold.

That intellectual, logical grip of complete representation which has been referred to as possessed by the Early Flemings is admirably shown in "The Crucifixion" by Quinten Massys. Here we find not only the relief of a sky; but a sky of well-observed clouds, over a far-reaching distance of which the vertical planes are convincingly placed by aerial perspective, while the incidents are varied in character and well contrasted. The city wall before the low hills, the castle on the left, and the nearer trees have none of the done-out-of-the-head appearance that occurs in contemporary Italian work where a sweetened gradation of colour over nondescript forms often does duty for everything. The Massys bears prolonged scrutiny and maintains its claims for structure, light and shade, and beauty of colour and effect, whilst such a test is but an opportunity for enhanced appreciation.

Nevertheless, the claim on behalf of Giorgione is justified by his having reached a more advanced stage; for he could not only devote the whole picture to a landscape and make the figures accessory, but was responsive to impressions of natural phenomena of the less obvious kind; those, in fact, of weather



THE CRUCIFIXION  
MASSYS



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conditions. Before his time there were few indications of a desire to give atmospherically effective lighting to a scene. The illumination of incidents, such as it was, had only been what, for the most part, a painter would employ within-doors to express the cubic contents of objects out-of-doors. Giorgione was alive to more than a conventional idea of sunshine. His "Tempest" is perhaps the first *pure* landscape ever painted. Its title alone is an innovation. It depicts a thunder-storm in the distance, with lowering clouds riven by lightning ; and the clouds have the metallic tint that accompanies the thunderous conditions. Leonardo (1452-1519), the observer unsurpassed, of course studied weather with everything else. At Windsor there is a pen drawing of a Storm in an Alpine Valley, exhibiting precisely the response to the spatial and structural stimulus of mountain, valley, cloud and falling rain that Turner would have felt.

Beautiful as are the skies of Perugino (1446-1523), they do not stand a test so severe. They are simply gradated colour, and mechanically gradated. The triptych in the National Gallery owes its great fascination to this meticulous gradation ; but the colour of the landscape is equally that of a formula. The blue of the sky is attenuated downwards to meet the upward attenuation of a brown that tints the nearest part of the landscape ; a greeny tinge resulting where they mingle. It is a veritable sky background with only a specious appearance of a landscape, the little thin trees notwithstanding.

Raphael followed his master Perugino only too faithfully in these respects ; for in none of his works does he exhibit that direct accord with Nature which is obvious in Massys, the Van Eycks, Patinir, David and their fellow Netherlanders, as well also as in Giorgione, Carpaccio, Basaiti, Signorelli, and other Italians, all his contemporaries. With Titian the landscape faculty is shared with Giorgione and carried to further development in the long years that were unhappily denied to the latter. There are landscape studies by Titian that are evidence of his serious pursuit of this branch of Art. It is usual to consider the "Bacchus and Ariadne" his finest achievement : but for my own part, the "Noli me tangere" seems, if less magnificent, yet more restrained and more sincere. It is certainly



more naturalistic in lighting, judged as landscape, and of greater homogeneity, because the scheme of colour is governed by the out-of-door lighting and not, as in the other picture, by the fields of local tints imposed by the garments of the figures.

The next great landscapist was Rubens (1577-1640). Is it not significant that, apart from Raphael, the two mighty men in Italian and Netherlandish painting should be both figure painters and landscapists? Rubens seems to have anticipated the vision of those who came centuries later, for he put light in the forefront of his endeavours in painting extensive scenes. In this respect he reached to greater heights than those who were still concerned with the designing of the shapes of things—trees, rocks, and rivers, *per se*. Rubens bathed his views in the light of the sun; not by a formula as Cuyp (1620-1691) did, but by the specific demands of the theme. His "Château de Steen" is at once "big" and exhaustive: a glorious panorama. And in the "Sunset" he has anticipated modern impressionism by courageously making the brilliance of the setting sun eat away the contour of the hill that forms the sky line. Both these works are in the National Gallery. But original, observant, and intrepid as Rubens was, he did not exalt his landscape to the standing of his figure compositions. It was the overflow of his perception and knowledge that made his landscape great in spite of him. He crowded it with human interest and a bucolic content.

The Dutch were the earliest to go consistently to Nature in order to paint exclusively the beauty of scenery and to make pictures wherein the human interest was eliminated; for not even Giorgione did that. And Everdingen (1621-1675) was the first who applied undivided energies to landscape. He took what was in his day the not inconsiderable journey to Norway in order to study rocks and waterfalls. Jacob van Ruisdael (1628-1682) was largely influenced by him. In the words of the National Gallery catalogue, "Ruisdael is one of the profound landscape painters. To an extremely perceptive sympathetic vision he added a master's knowledge." I would submit that the truth and beauty of the "View on the Shore at Scheveningen" is a finer testimony to his mastery than the heavy rocks and waterfalls that witness his profundity.



SUNSLT  
RUBENS



ON THE SHORE AT SCHIFFVENINGEN  
RUISDAEL

*See page 154.*



VIEW ON HOUNSLOW HEATH  
WILSON

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This is not a history of landscape painting, and it is not necessary to do more than mention the names of the greater men who handed on the torch. There are Van Goyen (1596-1656), Jan Wynants (1620-1682), Aart van der Neer (1603-1677), Jan Both (1610-1652), Philips de Koninck (1619-1688), Adriaen van de Velde (1635-1672) and Meindert Hobbema (1638-1709) the most popular of all in these days. In Holland, pictures of shipping were naturally in demand, and those of Jan van de Cappelle (1624-1679) and William van de Velde (1633-1707) are eminent. It will be seen what a golden age it was for painting by reference to the dates given. These men in many cases worked in friendly exchange of assistance. But the great Rembrandt seems to have worked alone from first to last—and that last was a touching isolation, for he outlived all those for whom he cared and with whom there were blood ties. Rembrandt's response to the call of outdoor phenomena was eager and full; and though his landscape paintings are comparatively few he made many etchings that bear witness to his ruling passion for effects of light; particularly over open stretches of country and upon the incidents of a scene, as in the famous plate of "The Three Trees."

At the same time Claude was in Rome making another landmark in the progress of landscape. Claude was a cook's apprentice; but left his native Lorraine to seek work, finding it as a servant to a landscape painter named Tassi. His painting brought him into more appreciative society than his puddings ever could have done. The poetry and majesty of his works are not due to brilliant technical powers but to his own sensitive nature which found in sunlight—it is always light in great landscape—and in the vast distances an inspiration that had not met with the same expression before. Claude has suffered badly from detractors—especially the ebullient Ruskin—but to those who can penetrate ever so little the emotions of a true landscape poet, Claude's magical romances of luminous skies over majestic trees and architecture never fail of a response. The classical and biblical themes he employed are but pegs on which to hang his dreams of Italian opulent landscape. Such themes were the Open Sesame that pictures of his day stood in need of in order to enter the collections of the rich who peopled

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Rome where Claude lived and worked in the seventeenth century. Classicism, real or sham, was *de rigueur* and Claude had to supply it.

Richard Wilson (1714-1782) in England followed Claude's lead in the matter of magnificence, but added a breadth of vision that Claude did not arrive at in his paintings, though his sketches of his pictures—the "*Liber Veritatis*"—are remarkable for breadth of treatment. Wilson has been called "the father of English landscape," but in his own day he did not get the acknowledgment he deserved. Happily, Time is bringing in his revenges day by day in that respect. In his paintings of English scenery he has laid foundations of truth to Nature in the service of personal emotion, that certainly justify his restricted title to fatherhood.

Gainsborough (1722-1788) was a more successful man in the worldly sense; but as a landscapist he was traditional rather than progressive. Crome (1768-1821) followed admittedly the Dutch lines, and with him Turner (1775-1851) did so at first, until that mighty man emerged in the fulness of his powers to surpass Claude and every other landscapist on their own grounds, leaving ultimately those challenges to the future which have, for the most part, not yet been met with triumph.

All landscapes of the old school were carefully composed in order to make them good as pictures in addition to being good as records of natural phenomena. The camera has brought negligence in this matter by its haphazard examples to which we have grown accustomed. But landscapes require to be schemed and designed quite as much as do figure compositions. Even where an almost literal copy of an actual scene seems to be good enough, there is always some little adjustment to be made in the disposition of things, and skies have to harmonise in their cloud shapes with the lines of the land objects. Further, it is imperative that the arrangement of tones shall conduce to a satisfactory *chiaroscuro*.

The sketch from Nature may be a valuable document of facts if it is a literal copy—as so many thousands are to-day that win places on exhibition walls—but a fine and important landscape requires much more. It must embody the painter's own ideas

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of the subject and thus stand for a personal expression of the theme. When it does this, we have as much right to call it a poem as we have to call Wordsworth's emotions pictures when they stir us by reviving our concepts of the things we love in Nature. The painter equally with the poet can only stir us when he interprets what he sees by the medium of all that he has felt throughout his past experiences of allied emotion. And that interpretation adds intensity to the message he conveys. The more our own experiences resemble his, the more sympathy constitutes our pleasure in his work. Just as a poet courts fullest response by clothing his thoughts in the most apt verbal and rhythmic dress possible, so must the painter strive for aptness and significance in his medium ; and he can only succeed if he have a rich store of resources in all the principles of truth and beauty that observation and technical experience have accumulated.

It is a fallacy to suppose that Nature meticulously copied must be more moving and beautiful than when Art interprets her. This false notion is founded upon the supposition that Nature, pure and simple, is one thing, and that Art is another, and therefore something adventitious, perhaps antagonistic. Art would be (and is) something repellent if she, herself, were not an outcome of Nature. Bacon truly said that Art was Man added to Nature. Plato's theory of Ideas assumes that whatever we actually see or touch is but an imperfect version of its perfect prototype already existing in the mind of man ; and although I do not pin my faith to Plato exclusively I am content with his notion of ideality as far as it goes in matters of painting. Dürer, in one of his numerous writings, says that an artist " can pour out sufficiently what he has been collecting within himself from the outside."

This, then, is the justification for the painting of landscape in the studio : an impossible process to any who have not learnt their Nature through long years of loving devotion. The young and inexperienced cannot do it. Their place is in the open, learning. All the fine landscapes having poetry and emotion, and truth besides, are studio-made. Many are designed from first to last from imagination ; many from mere notes and ideas rapidly recorded. It is no contention to

instance "Chill October" by Millais (1829-1896), which was painted in a shed built in the open. That work is admirable in some points, but not all. Thoughts of Claude and Turner and Corot (1796-1875) are a good set-off to Millais; for Corot's finest pictures are not literal open-air work.

In the studio the work is drafted, cogitated, and evolved, with reference perhaps to many sketches from Nature. Its lines and masses are determined with a more or less conscious knowledge of what Content their Form will evoke, according to the principles discussed in an early chapter: its chiaroscuro is worked out to similar ends: its colour is schemed, and its light effects studied. All this may be said to involve æsthetic interest—the appeal to the sensuous receptivity of the spectator, whose response is an acknowledgment of beauty because it is an endorsement of his own concepts of what is desirable in the subject matter. This was argued under the section entitled "The Beauty Sense." Plato's "Idea" involves the same ideality already in the spectator's mind.

But no good landscape can stop short at expressive shapes, fine colour and pleasing tones. The artist must get a fuller response by securing realistic truth; and this also is a matter of observation and experience. There are two outstanding requirements for convincing presentment of landscape. One is a sense of space, and the other homogeneity. These are qualities that belong to any actual view; and therefore they immediately please, be the spectator who he may. Let us examine them at a little length.

It is a fact that if in a landscape we see objects incorrectly drawn either as to outline or to scale, their faults will be largely condoned if their tones are correctly enough graded to keep them in their proper places in space. In ordinary effects, as everyone must have noticed, the distance is lighter than the nearer parts as far as shadows are concerned. This is due to the atmosphere that is between our eyes and the distant shadows, which in some conditions disappear altogether. A view, then, may have very many intermediate tones consequent upon the vapour in the air, and the due graduation of them gives us the impression of more or less distance. This is called "aerial perspective." Whatever the artist may do in

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the way of massing lights and darks, he must preserve aerial perspective, or there will be no "recession of planes." \* In other words, buildings, mountains, and everything else in their several "vertical planes" will not appear in their proper retiring order. We should get no such feeling of space and depth as the Claude landscape presents without a graduated recession of planes. The reader cannot fail to see how the beauty of that work, though much due to the grandeur of the design in pattern, lacks nothing in respect to massing, notwithstanding the thorough graduation. That quality ensures a gentle though rapid transition from plane to plane over the vast stretches of ground depicted, and thus prevents harshness of contrast while enhancing aerial perspective. If the difference of tone were as sharply opposed in all other parts as it is in the large trees against the sky, the picture would have an unnatural, stagy look of those "wings" and "rows" which are the devices of theatrical scenery.

The other quality, easily jeopardised by copying an actual scene out-of-doors is homogeneity: often described as "oneness" by people who are afraid of long words. What is implied is the general or collective aspect of a scene to which incidents are but contributive details. When such breadth of treatment is adopted largeness of style results, both in form and in colour.

Breadth or generalisation comes to be the chief delight of the mature painter, who has so well learnt the outwardness of the variety of things Nature offers that he at last looks for and finds another aspect of things that satisfies him more completely. Henceforth he looks not analytically but synthetically, and finds a oneness in a scene. He does not regard the objects but the entity they make up between them. Beautiful as are the lights and shades, the shapes and colours of the objects, they are thus beautiful to the artist only in order to combine and fuse their charms into a single effect. To see in

\* PLANES.—This term is used in two ways in the practice of Art: one way refers to the *vertical planes* of a view, which mark varying distances from the spectator, to whom all objects, high or low, occurring at such distances on a line running across the view, would lie in the same vertical plane. The other way in which the term is used applies to sculpture chiefly, and denotes the broad, level passages into which smaller modelling may be generalised.



this way requires a special sort of vision that comes by practice. It is neither dull nor keen; it does not blur and it does not accentuate; but it extracts, eliminates, and coalesces. Such a vision seizes the spirit, the individuality, and the quality of a view, whilst rendering its separate parts by suggestion. The picture is then more potent to exercise the imagination; it is a better medium to convey the emotions of the artist, and so engage those of the spectator, than it would be were every avenue for the imagination closed by the *ne plus ultra* of detail rendered with exhaustive literalism.

If one looks at a masterly work this largeness and breadth of vision is obvious; but in the work of a beginner who is quite rightly and properly at the stage of seeing the outwardness of things, one finds each object standing portrayed for its own sake, not for the sake of the great *ensemble* of which it is but a part—the true homogeneity.

It is for these reasons that to the eye of the ordinary man, many advanced works appear as but half-statements, too much generalised, too simple. Where he sees a landscape teeming with small forms and myriad spots of colour, the artist shows no such intricacy of material, but a simple statement of a few broad facts of shape and colour. Although this synthetic habit of vision obtains in all branches of representative art, its results are perhaps most noticeable in landscape, where a tendency prevails to see a general hue over large tracts of space; the power, in other words, of feeling a simple colour harmony. To those who seldom examine pictures such simplification must needs appear as under-statement. In the later water-colours of Turner, for example, hills and vales and broad middle distances seem sometimes inefficiently stated in one wash of blue too decided and too general; foregrounds appear in the same way as too uniformly yellow or tawny and too empty of form. But to those who have grown to see with something of Turner's vision these works are a beautiful synthesis; a high expression of the colour sense. The student must examine them in our national galleries in order to appreciate the point of the argument. He will come to see in these apparently simple statements inexhaustible suggestions of the

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variety, accidentals, lights, shades, and modulations of colour seen in Nature.

In the new way of looking at landscape the weather is an important arbiter of beauty ; and the weather, if one thinks of it, can be summed up as far as paintings are concerned, as varying conditions in light and in atmosphere. The sun, or the broad light from the sky, is the great factor which reveals different aspects of things. In storm and twilight the comparative lack of light is the factor. Rain and wind can only partially be painted as such : they have to be painted by the results that appear upon the objects they affect, and this amounts in the end to the way the light strikes them, and what kind of light.

Before the days when the ordinary town dweller enjoyed frequent holidays in the country, and when journeys were serious undertakings, Nature appreciation was almost entirely the prerogative of the wealthy, whose habit it was to go abroad to see "scenery"—chiefly Swiss mountains and Italian lakes. It was a conventional kind of devotion to the beautiful, and was called "taking the grand tour." By degrees, however, this "scenery" idea percolated through to the middle classes, who found what they wanted in Wales, Scotland, and the Lake District, and occasionally in other spots in these Islands. Only a few painters, and those the least popular in their time, were inspired by the beauties of Nature's *effects*, as apart from Nature's forms, and their work suffered a good deal of neglect because it was not in the grand scenery style. After Claude and Wilson and Turner, it seemed paltry to paint haywains and cornfields and farm buildings. But with such thematic material Constable (1776-1837) was the first painter to give the glitter of moisture on the verdure of the countryside, reflecting the grey light from the sky. His rain effects elicited taunts from the critics, who asked for their umbrellas. But largely misunderstood as he was in his own day, he is now recognised as one of the great later pioneers in landscape painting.

As townsmen were able to know more of the charm of the country they naturally began to love it more, and by degrees felt the appeal of Nature's moods where her forms were neither grand nor beautiful according to the old idea. Thus they began

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to admire Constable's works in spite of the fact that he painted most of them within a few square miles in Essex instead of seeking his subjects abroad. Nor did they resent the homely charms of oaks, hills, and pools, as rendered by John Crome.

Landscape thus exerted a new fascination, namely, the portraying of transient effects for which not only the art expert, but the ordinary man could find a loving response in his experience. This appreciation of natural truth sends men to-day back to the early works of the English water-colourists, and at the same time opens men's eyes to unsuspected beauties of the old grand style of pictures painted by the great masters. Turner's daring statements of colour have been recognised as statements of truth. Next came a popular appreciation of the few French painters who constituted what is known as the Barbizon School from the name of a village in the forest of Fontainebleau where they chiefly worked. These men, inspired by English landscape painting, found all-sufficient inducement in woodland scenes, the gentle river bordered by feathery willows and alders, the common and the village, all seen under some passing aspect of what we may call weather ; that is to say, the freshness of morning, the sweet calm of evening, the storm, the blaze of noonday, and the glories of dawn and sunset.

From that time onward landscape painting of the best kind concerned itself with problems of beauty as brought about by light and air. The clear atmosphere of southern Europe was no longer regarded as an indispensable condition for pictures. Colour, it was found, and gradation of tone, offered more subtle beauties lurking in hazy air and mist. Going still further in the same direction painters have seen that any transient effect, even when caused by steam and smoke from factories, can be made to reveal beauties of tone and colour. Thus it has been admitted that the operation of natural laws in thematic material which was once held to be ugly and inartistic can produce conditions which are beautiful and pictorial.

One would have thought that this healthy development along the lines of truth to Nature would, once it was in full swing, have continued, since Nature is inexhaustible, and

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there is no possibility of coming to the end of her inspiration and the resources of art enterprise. Unfortunately the last few decades have witnessed a lamentable departure from the obvious lines of progress. It is a denial of Nature which has affected all Art ; but its glaring anomalies are most noticeable in landscape painting, because the subject-matter of this class of work is most closely concerned with Nature pure and simple. But this regrettable phase will pass—is passing. The healthy and beautiful is still the ideal of the great mass of sincere painters, and it may be hoped that the blot upon the reputation of the Art of the twentieth century will be lost sight of in the near future.

### IMPRESSIONISM

The qualities of light and air have repeatedly been insisted upon, and it has been explained that they were studied and practised by the French "Impressionists" after Monet and Pissarro had seen the works of Turner. But the pictures of Constable and of Bonington (1801-1828), who, though an Englishman lived and worked in France, likewise had a powerful influence upon Corot and Rousseau (1812-1867), supporting the movement carried on by the Impressionists, the beginning of which is thus described by Richard Muther in his "History of Modern Painting" :—

"The name of Impressionists dates from an exhibition in Paris which was got up at Nadar's in 1871. The catalogue contained a great deal about impressions ; for instance, '*Impression de mon pot au feu*,' '*Impression d'un chat qui se promène*.' In his criticism Claretie summed up the impressions and spoke of the *Salon des Impressionistes*."

These quoted works, however, do not seem to have been what we now call impressionistic painting. It was years after that Ed. Manet (1832-1883), modelling himself upon Velasquez, who had become the vogue in Paris, arrived at a method of representation that had nothing in it of the shadows of Caravaggio but stated simply its effects by colour contrasts alone. It is a method demanding perception of tone-values which in the older periods was arrived at through the pictorial require-

ments of chiaroscuro by shade, not by the varying luminosities of positive colour.

Corot and his friends at Barbizon were already pursuing the same quest of representing things out-of-doors with a natural out-of-door lighting ("pleinairisme"). Degas and others attacked the problem of momentary vision as opposed to the old long and deliberate scrutiny. His horse-racing and ballet-girl subjects aim at giving motion—not the *tableaux vivants* effect of the old masters.

The new way of seeing things in order to paint them : the way that has come to be known as Impressionism is really what separates all modern work from that of the earlier masters and of many later. The change did not come suddenly : there are traces and suggestions of it all through the centuries ; but it was first systematically adopted by Velasquez. There is much of it also in Rubens and Rembrandt, as we have seen ; and, of course, it was Turner's later method. But these names cannot by any means be exclusively attributed to the development.

Impressionism really implies the idea of a sudden and short view. If we suppose ourselves to be sitting in a moving vehicle from which we see something as we pass it by—be it an object or a scene or an effect—our recollection of it will be our impression ; and if we have good memories and are capable painters we can reproduce, more or less convincingly, that impression. It must be obvious that what would impress us in such a case would be the salient features—the big masses of colour, the strongest appearance of light, the spots of dark if they were large and important (not otherwise, because light glare alone excites the retinal nerves, not absence of light). It must be equally obvious that the minutiae of shape, of texture, and of small "drawing," as it is called, could not possibly be registered in the mind even if it were on the retina, where it would certainly be blurred in the conditions of motion postulated. The same conditions would hold if our eyes were still and the things seen moved.

It is possible to represent the still wheels of a standing carriage perfectly well without recourse to impressionism ; but when the wheels revolve there is no other than the impres-

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sionistic way. The old masters, who did not think it right to omit all spokes and to paint only the flash of light upon them—which they undoubtedly must have noticed—never succeeded in getting an idea of motion. Their wheels were always dead still in spite of galloping horses. They were perfectly logical nevertheless, for they probably perceived the *reductio ad absurdum* that to paint wheels as they saw them in motion involved the obligation of painting the horses' legs in a similar manner and indeed anything else that moved rapidly enough. But recognising art as a convention they were prepared to leave cinematograph effects to the imagination of the spectator.

Assuming, then, that it is desirable to paint moving things in the impressionistic way, there can be no doubt that a still, lengthy scrutiny of everything would not give the proper effects at all, but something quite different—something, in fact, very like Van Eyck would have made of it. From the Impressionist's point of view Van Eyck is all wrong: from Van Eyck's point of view Impressionism is ridiculously misinforming. We others have thus the widest possible choice of infinite degrees of compromise in between.

There can be no doubt that much of the delight we get out-of-doors in the beauties of Nature's forms, colours, and effects is due to the fleeting impressions that are made upon our minds by our eyes; and that if we sat down and studied it all deliberately and piecemeal we should never be able to continue enjoying it in the same way as we did in the first flush of the vision. That vision is an amalgam of everything, and its beauty is that of the mixture, not of the component parts. To seek the component parts for their own sakes is to smooth the impression out of our minds. This is easily demonstrable on experiment by anybody.

Impressionism is therefore something accidental: and it is not at all what would be associated with clear and comfortable sight, such as we desire when we contemplate a flower or a face. It is for that reason that I maintain that to paint still life and portraiture in an impressionistic way is positive nonsense, because that way does not give the painter the least chance to do what is wanted in displaying the characteristics of

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the subject-matter. Impressionism can only reasonably be employed for movement, for very transient effects, and for effects that can only be transiently seen, as already explained. Painters know that there are two ways of looking at things : one way is that of clear sharp vision—the normal sight, which consists of a great number of concentrated views on different tiny points, taking place one after the other by the movement of the eyeball—the other way is that of seeing everything at once *without* looking at points sharply focussed. This is an acquired way when it is deliberate ; but it is also the normal way when we do not trouble ourselves about looking at anything intently. It is in this non-intent way that we get our passing impressions.

It would seem then that the *rationale* in a choice of methods must depend upon the theme of the picture painted. Van Eyck can be proved to be as right as Monet ; for Van Eyck also painted in the piecemeal way that we see when we wish to look thoroughly at things. What the Impressionists do not seem to recognise is the damaging fact that we must necessarily look at pictures—Van Eycks or Monets—in the piecemeal way, as not to do so is not to see the picture properly at all. That is why extreme impressionistic methods defeat their object. In the jerky movements of our eyes all over the canvas we are seeing its extravagances by precisely the same point-to-point method as we should see an actual interior or landscape, and it refuses to resolve. Van Eyck therefore gets it both ways and Monet only one way. There *is* pleasure and there *is* truth in the Van Eyck method, and those who deny it are the young and inexperienced who think “ the latest ” and “ the best ” are synonymous terms.

Another point is that in some of the early masters who give us structural detail we have to supply a little atmosphere ourselves. I submit that this is no more difficult than supplying, ourselves, the structural detail in pictures that are nothing but atmosphere and impression. The structure comes up easily enough if the impression is truly caught and the drawing kept in mind. That is the case in the earliest “ whole-hog ” impression of all—Turner’s “ Rain, Steam and Speed.” Of that still supreme work I will quote the remarks of Mr. Horace A.







RAIN, STEAM AND SPILLED  
TURNER

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Mummery, who is an expert upon the works of Turner. He says :—

“The painter has chosen a subject which by the canons of Art, at any rate then in force, is by no means inherently beautiful. The bridge, a straight, unfeeling piece of engineering, and the rushing train, seem utterly out of place in a fair and ancient valley ; but they are made the subject of a picture not for their own sakes as being beautiful or lovable in themselves, but as the expression of an idea. It is the contrast of the new with the immeasurably old, the struggle of civilisation against the wild ; and so the wind blows, but the train dashes on, its white steam drifting with the scud of rain. Then comes a flash of wandering sunshine, and lo ! there is a poem ! The lines of the metals and the parapets of the bridge are purposely ‘fuzzed’ ; and this by the hand that could draw the most difficult lines of coast and cape without hesitation or stumbling. To have drawn in ordinary fashion the trim bridge and mathematically true metals would have been to utterly miss the purpose of the picture and so the artist has softened the hard lines that we may not by realities be drawn away from the spirit of the scene. The treatment of the natural features is also of the broadest, because it is the storm that is essential ; the storm pitted against speed.”

I would add that as one contemplates the picture in the National Gallery, one feels the rocking of the oncoming train and gathers emphasis of speed from the poor hare who tries to escape by racing it : that the misty, middle distance takes form through the opacity of the lateral beams, and grows into river bank, trees, bridge, reflections, and figures, whilst the colour asserts itself as that of verdure illuminated and of shadow iridescent.

“To make a true impression,” Mr. Mummery continues, “is one of the most difficult problems in Art ; but, unfortunately, any duffer with a little practice can make sham ones. Impressionism is only possible to those whose experience enables them to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials. The sham variety, is marked by the wholesale rejection of detail merely because it is detail.”

It is at this point of Impressionism that we find the be-

ginning of all the trouble and dissension in art appreciation. Whilst painters and public alike were content with representations of the form and substance of things and their proper place in a view as determined by perspective, linear and aerial ; whilst also the colours employed could be recognised as local tints, Art went on its way free from schism. There had always been schools of style, manner, and opinion ; but the differences between them were as milestones in a general progress. Whatever signs of an impressionistic vision had already appeared, as in the case of Rubens and Velasquez, were accepted as conquests in the fields of realism. They had not amounted to a change of style in painting due to a change of vision. Turner was the pioneer in this change of style ; and at first only the few who could assume his new vision saw its value in his late work. They knew that " Rain, Steam and Speed " could have been painted in no other way. Day by day his vision was better understood, and finally he received universal acknowledgment.

It is always thus with a pioneer who finds real truths ; for Truth tells, and innovators of merit quickly find a public, however badly they are first ignored or assailed. This is the commonest fact in art history. Equally true is it that those who are shams and charlatans never outlive the first disrepute they encounter. How could they ? There is nothing to be ultimately revealed as merit. They thrive on publicity, not on a real public regard, and when that publicity fails they fall flat, never to rise.

As Mr. Mummery says : " Any duffer can make sham impressions." Many duffers have, and still do, for the very essence of Impressionism is a suspension of all the mental activities that have gone to the painting of form from the days of Attic sculpture to the present. The new way of seeing imposes a new way of painting in which contours and outlines are *suggested*, not realised,—in which colour is liquid, gradated, iridescent ; not laid unmodified in prescribed areas. To the incompetent painter, such release from strict draughtsmanship and colour-matching is a feather-bed for his fall.

It is this fatal ease by which the duffers slip through the door opened by Impressionism that has brought about the

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ridiculous Post-Impressionism, *Pointillisme*, and other fantastic novelties. Novelties are to-day more marketable than ever they were ; and dealers in pictures will confess—do confess—that the so-called pictures which are in this new class are those it is imperative to show because the Press frequently takes no notice of modern works that are painted on the old lines. I am speaking of matters of which I know the truth, and I make this little interpolation as an encouragement to those who, whilst deploring the shams, are disposed to blame their own judgment. Art can only thrive by justifying itself in popular opinion, which is, in fact, the ultimate judgment of the centuries. And it matters not whether we paint in the old style or the new so long as we respond to the beauties of Nature. Only revolutionary youths, and other lacking experience, imagine that the great dead are wrong and obsolete. There is vast wisdom in the old proverb : “What is new is seldom true ; what is true is seldom new.”

### THE GREAT LANDSCAPE POETS

It is because landscape brings the painter closer to the heart of Nature that it arouses in him feelings and moods quite different from those of the figure painter or portraitist. In a figure composition, for example, the characters must be represented with emotions of their own, which are therefore, from the beholder's point of view, objective emotions, as they would be in the characters of a stage play. We may laugh or sorrow with such personages, but their moods are not ours : we do but induce them in ourselves. This sympathy is undeniable ; but it is of a different kind to the impersonal sympathy prompted by the moods of Nature. The latter are purely subjective ; for the trees and clouds do not smile or weep as human characters do. The finer-drawn sensibilities of the man of modern times have more affinity with these indefinite moods suggested by the face of Nature than had the sensibilities of the average man of the past who needed painted smiles and tears to invoke his own.

What, after all, is the secret of greatness in painted landscape ? If we look back over the whole range from the Early Flemings to our living painters, we shall, I think come to the

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decision that the most moving pictures are not those in which the topography of a scene is given with truth nor even with beauty. The really transcendent ones are by men who have responded to moods of Nature rather than to the visual facts of scenery. And in the proportion of this response by any landscapist, his work excels. The Northern painters were given to a solicitous delineation of objects : those of the Latin races were more alive to the general effect. As painting developed and landscape became better painted everywhere, this difference grew more marked. Racial temperament caused a reaction to the immediate and the concrete in the one case, and to the remembered and abstract in the other. This is the difference between Hobbema and Claude, who were contemporaries. Both methods may be poetical ; but in the first case the poetry is that of the scene itself at any moment, intrinsic, awaiting all who can perceive it ; in the second case the poetry is adventitious, coming from a general stock in the artist's mind where it has accumulated by way of poetical experience of Nature's constant inspiration.

Flemish, German, Dutch, all have invention and realism, sometimes co-existing with boundless fancy and fascination as in Dürer ; sometimes with exceptional poetry of mood as in Ruysdael. But with the Italians we fail to find the patient zeal of the Dutch and their distinctly ordinary way of seeing ordinary things. Perugino was a hopelessly feeble realistic landscape painter, but his alluring skies more than balance the faults of his facts. The beauty of his skies is gradation pure and simple ; for to that quality alone had he responded in his meagre out-door observation. But poetry lurks in gradation and so Perugino is loved. Giorgione, with far more sensitive observation, felt the beauty of Nature and did his best to state it. Similarly, both Titian and Tintoretto were more impressed by Nature's moods than by the natural objects upon which they were manifested, and which, short of the mood, the Dutchmen could paint better.

But the two who rose to greater heights than any in this poetical interpretation were Claude and Turner. Neither were Italians by birth. The one lived a long life in Rome, and the other made two pilgrimages to Italy ; but both men were

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inspired by Italian skies and vistas. Wilson was a third, only a little less transcendent. The incessant sketching activities of Turner were an outward sign of a passive drinking-in of the essence of a scene : its generality. Claude likewise sketched from Nature, perhaps with more analysis than did Turner ; but even his tree studies have evidence that he was captivated by beauty of effect.

The sitting down and copying what is before one's eyes is too short a cut : it leaves insufficient opportunity for gestation and re-birth. It can in skilful hands achieve truths of realism which will rightly delight millions, as Millais's "Chill October" has ; but, righteously done, it does not draw sufficiently upon impressions stored in the mind and thus secure full personal interpretation. Of course, one can sit down to a scene and then deliberately paint something else, but that is neither one thing nor the other.

The power of passively absorbing poetical effect to utter it later as personal expression, was shared by Wilson with Claude, and by Turner with Wilson.

It has been claimed that the painting of the sun in the heavens is the feat that separates Claude from all before him. I think that is saying both too much and not enough. Others had painted the sun—Rubens for example—and it was more than the sun that Claude delighted in. His paintings, such as have not been made raw and chill by the removal of varnish-glazes, show, as never was shown before, the broad, generous, all-enveloping sunshine over a vast expanse, and particularly its play and sparkle upon sea, architecture, and figures in foregrounds. Colour, of course, holds the expository wonder of this ; but in his drawings another fascination rises to the level of the sunlight quality and is equally strong in its appeal—the strength and grace of his shapes. This aspect of Claude's work is continually missed by writers and critics. No one else ever endued trees with such ravishing beauty of silhouette and modelling ; with so much dignity, mightiness, and massiveness ; such grace, charm, and laciness. The feathery boughs of the one kind and the sinuous lines of the other are the keynotes of composition as well as the points which give that sting of rapture the true artist lives for.

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Claude, obviously, did not copy all this form from Nature with the literalism of the Dutch. He "soaked it in." His sun problems were a matter of studio endeavour ; his fairyland—a fairyland for giants, not kelpies—was invented by virtue of honest sketches from Nature, which were material for day-dreams. It was thus that Claude produced, palpitating with his visions of that mighty fairyland bathed in sunlight, spread with wooded hills, broken by rocky clefts on which castles and buildings gleamed, and shaded with those magnificent trees in the nearer mid-distance, where figures enacted the legends of old.

Ruskin summed all this up as "a general sensation of the impossible," which was as wrong as anything he ever said. Nothing in Claude is impossible, for the very essence of his susceptibility was naturalism. Ruskin meant that his scenes were improbable and thus non-realistic. It is for that very quality that they appeal so strongly. Their poetry—a word for which I cannot find a synonym more definite—is an aroma rather than the visual image : it is a repercussion in our deeper sensibilities.

Whether we consider romantic landscape of this kind or the more immediate truths of landscape such as Constable painted, the deep-seated responses are equally ready and constant if we have experiences wherein they can work. But they are of a different kind in Constable and the Dutchmen from those of Italian origin. Constable moves us with nostalgia ; we think of our youth and our happy days. The manners of a simple past, the directness of man's work with Nature, the feel of sun, and wind, and rain, draw us convincingly on to the very ground and we live in the actual environment. With Claude and Wilson the transports are of a more abstract kind ; we look towards a place we desire to be in, but it is remote and dream-like. Wilson's work is, I think, even less realistic and more sophisticated than Claude's, except in his views of Wales and England, which have more of the actuality of the Dutch.

With Turner we are at a loss for pigeon-holing and classification. He defies it. His compositions were imitative of Claude but he had wider experiences of Nature to put into them than Claude possessed. His sunlight was less a formula and so







LANDSCAPE, WITH THE STORY OF MERCURY AND BATHYS  
 [FROM "LIBER VERITAS"]  
 (C) ADL.

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more convincing, though, I think, not more poetically attractive. In "Crossing the Brook" Turner surpassed both Claude and Wilson, in combining classic magnificence with realistic truth. But his later works: the Venice pictures, the "Ashes of Germanicus" and others of that kind leave Constable, and his true and tender realism, on another plane to soar into an atmosphere of sheer poetry—too rare for many—the aerial ecstasies of light and colour.

A proviso made by Turner that his "Sun rising in a Mist" and "Dido building Carthage," should be hung between Claude's "Mill" ("Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca") and "Embarkation of Queen of Sheba," leaves no doubt that he wished to be compared with his rival by public estimation. The condition of his bequest has been very freely observed. The fact remains that the somewhat vainglorious challenge has not dimmed in the slightest the reputation of Claude, nor has it enhanced Turner's. The methods of the latter are the less permanent and as Turner's hues lose their brilliance, the proper balance of tone values and colour contrasts become more and more falsified. A fairer comparison between the two exists in their respective drawings and etchings. Beauty of shapes is characteristic of both.

Turner's etchings are, of course, the skeletons of the "Liber Studiorum" prints, and they are not comparable with Claude's "Liber Veritatis" which they attempted to rival, because the latter, engaved in mezzotint by Earlom, an Englishman, and Caracciolo, an Italian, are but transcripts. Claude instituted a system of making a kind of draft of every picture he produced, in order, it is said, that he might be able to denounce the forgeries with which he was much troubled. These drafts were in pen and bistre (brown wash) and they were all upon the leaves of a book which was variously named, but is now known as "Liber Veritatis." Turner's "Liber Studiorum"—a title of flattering imitation—was produced by him or under his direction in an etched line with an added mezzotint tone in resemblance of Earlom's mezzotints of 1777. In Claude's drawings, seen only by the doubtful translations, there is an equable level of merit. They are all fascinating designs in breadth of sunny effect, enchanting distances, and

majestic trees. There are two hundred of them, and if their similarities produce a sense of monotony it must be remembered that they *were never intended for the public eye*. Turner, with this example before him of what it would be advantageous to avoid, produced far fewer prints (seventy-one were published) and varied them to the utmost in every style of subject possible to him, working, himself, upon the plates at times, and always exerting the most exhaustive control over the engraving. They are a monument to his versatility and inexhaustible resource; but splendid as they are, considered as inventions, they do not really touch Claude at all in the matter of rivalry. The odds are too unfair. Claude does not take up the challenge. In freshness, knowledge, and skill Turner often proves himself to be much the richer, but he not infrequently falls below Claude's steady level of beautiful invention, conventional as it may be.

Considering both collections as a whole, the "Liber Studiorum" prints tell as a more striking manifestation of powers of design and chiaroscuro than of natural effect. In regarding them as a less efficient medium than colour, Turner seems to have emphasised the allurements of composition. It is in the great colour triumphs that his intention of rendering spatial and atmospheric charm is unmistakable. But the prints of Claude's "Liber" suggest that effect, rather than design and composition, dominated the mind of the earlier artist. If Claude was limited, his limitations were those of poetry.

## PORTRAITURE

An old popular name for a portrait was "likeness." It is a term almost gone out of use, and that is a fact rather to be regretted because the word implies unmistakably the aim and object of portraiture. When a community wishes to commemorate its great men it takes the obvious course of creating likenesses of them which shall tell to future generations the kind of men they were. When we seek for a record of the personal appearance of those dear to us we wish that it should be a likeness; something that will recall to mind the very traits and expression of the absent one.

From the earliest times portraits have been made of leaders

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of thought; of pharaohs, emperors, and kings, and the most cherished of all these records are those which are considered authentic; that is to say, those which hold the best evidence to prove that the portrait was truly a likeness of the person represented.

The best portraiture is that which conveys not only a vivid representation of the outward appearance of the subject, but likewise a true indication of his mental characteristics. The latter factor is probably of the more importance, for it secures the psychology of the sitter—the man. But portraiture has undergone many phases and fashions. One of these was the practice of giving an allegorical significance to the sitter, whose personality was thinly veiled by a fancy name. This was done usually in the case of ladies' portraits. Titian painted a "Flora" and a "Vanity" as likenesses of particular ladies of his time. The Beauties of the Court of Charles II. were likewise painted as classical goddesses, often with all the proper "attributes." This practice held till the days of Reynolds (1723-1792), who occasionally represented his ladies as Vestals, Muses, and Graces. In our own times portraiture has been treated in a way that admits of less Content, but more realistic Form, very often in the manner of still life. Sometimes the psychology of the sitter has been neglected for a kind of landscape feeling whereby it was not so much the sitter as the effect of light upon the sitter which was presented, as though a mere inanimate object rather than a living person were the subject of the picture.

The portrait is not an efficient one if it is not first and foremost a "likeness" of the sitter inwardly as well as outwardly.

It is on record that Reynolds thought very little of the *outward* likeness in portraiture. He is reported to have said that "he could instruct any boy that chance might throw in his way to paint a likeness in half a year's time; but to give an impressive and a just expression and character to a portrait was another thing."

It is, in fact, the bearing, the personal aspect, that should form the motive of the portrait rather than the actual details of the features. And this personal aspect, being only partially due to physical characteristics, obliges the portraitist to have

watchful regard to mental characteristics also. Indeed, they must form the chief motive in cases where the sitter cannot boast of a prepossessing exterior.

There are sitters who are negatively vain, so to speak; proud of their little uglinesses. But strong chins, piercing eyes, warts and other ornaments generally look after themselves. Old Oliver Cromwell, who insisted on being done "warts and all" was a *poseur*. His wart was not a heaven-sent attribute, nor a beauty-spot. He could have been identified without it. To insist on turning it to the painter was merely a gratification of his vanity for virtue, which was the vice of self-esteem; he would show the world of what truth and honesty he was compounded. What Reynolds meant by the "likeness" that he so disparaged was just this meticulous delineation of surface markings; warts, wrinkles, hairs, scars, and other details.

But the apposite point arises as to the expediency of flattering the mental and moral characteristics. The great painters of old were sometimes merciless in this respect. The portrait of Cardinal Pamfili, Pope Innocent X., by Velasquez, is a striking case of a fearless statement of unpleasant truths. In reference to this I quote a passage from "The Art of Velasquez," by Walter Armstrong, who says, "How absolutely alive, with all his past and such potentialities as are left to him, the old man is! The suspicious cunning, and not unreserved sensuality, the vindictiveness, the emancipation from workaday honesty that allowed Cardinal Pamfili to pilfer books he could not buy; the glance, almost of apprehension, that betrays one undergoing a new or at least infrequent experience, all are there."

There may be occasions when such true representations of the average or general appearance of the sitter will be controlled by the painter under force of other circumstances. For example, had Velasquez been painting an official portrait of the Pope as Head of the Church, seated on the Papal Chair with the triple crown on his head, he would undoubtedly have stressed the majesty of the subject and tried to import something of benignity into the face and bearing of the Father of the Faithful. But as a portrait of the notorious Cardinal Pamfili the work did not call for these pontifical airs and graces.



INNOCENT X  
VILLASQUIZ



## S U B J E C T - M A T T E R

Expression is a muscular manifestation. In the human countenance it has been developed as a language for the eye, as speech is a language for the ear. Expression, indeed, is a universal language which never needs to be learnt but is always understood. So quick are we to read infallibly the slightest shade of muscular change in the face that expression ranks as the readiest, most powerful, most moving factor in personal intercourse. Portraiture therefore stands or falls by it.

The shape of the head is, of course, a factor in outward likeness; but it has little to do with psychological expression. That relies upon the capture of the *normal* expression as opposed to a *momentary* one. And this is a matter in which photography has to yield to painting; for the cumulative impression is easily disturbed by passing thoughts of the sitter, and it is more difficult to preserve by the photographer than by the painter.

Our usual, general, and characteristic facial expression has two aspects, either of which may be depicted with good result. There is first, the still, introspective aspect, when the face shows no evidence of response to external stimuli. Elderly people of a thoughtful nature are always satisfactorily represented by this phase. The face will have the strictly normal cast that is caused by muscular habit. The muscles, being in repose, will have relapsed to the conditions that long usage has made easiest—they take the line of least resistance. It may be objected that such a condition is the very negation of expression—that it expresses nothing. True, it expresses nothing belonging to the moment, but something of greater import; the life-history of the sitter; and that, in an elderly person, is something worth getting, especially if it can be got with the moving truth of a Rembrandt.

The other aspect of characteristic facial expression is that shown by vigorous people who have not yet arrived at the half-comatose state of the meditative aged. This vigorous phase is the portraitist's finest opportunity, and was fully explored by Holbein and Hals, Rubens and Van Dyck. It is not retrospective but anticipatory. It indicates how life will yet be met by the subject.



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Both these phases indicate character, and it must be obvious that they are demonstrated not by the bony structure, nor by surface markings, but by muscular formation. Sir Charles Bell, in his "Anatomy of Expression," explains that "besides the muscles analogous to those of brutes, there is an intermixture of muscles in the human countenance which evinces a provision for expression quite independent of the original destination of those muscles that are common to him and animals. There are muscles not only peculiar to the human countenance, but which act where it is impossible to conceive any other object for their exertion than that of expressing feeling and sentiment. These muscles indicate emotions and sympathies of which the lower animals are not susceptible, and as they are peculiar to the human face they may be considered as the index of mental energy in opposition to mere animal expression."

All these facial muscles, especially the marvellously mobile orbicular muscles of the eyes and mouth (the chief seats of expression) responding as they do throughout life to the slightest thought-stimulus, develop variously in individuals as they are more or less and variously actuated by temperament. The eye prone to frown, the lips ready to smile, will by muscular habit perpetuate an indication of these temperamental dispositions in the face.

If this muscular development is lost sight of in a portrait, either by adventitious suggestions of the artist or by his pictorial quest after effects of light, the work will more or less fail of the deeper psychological significance and be to the same extent trivial in point of expression; or, alternatively, it will have that nondescript mask-like look which evokes neither sympathy with nor interest in the sitter's personality.

It must not be supposed that a fleeting expression can entirely obliterate the permanent cast. Nor is it to be questioned that a fleeting expression is equally characteristic, potent, and charming. The advocacy of the permanent rests simply on the ground that the greater includes the less.

If we study the portraits of Hans Holbein the younger (1497-1593) we shall see that their amazing magnetic force is due not to striking effects of illumination nor to the pictorial



PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN  
HOLBEIN



SOBIESKI, KING OF POLAND  
REMBRANDT

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charms of mystery, softness, and suggestion, but to precise and searching delineation of the modelling and skin-folds of the parts overlying the muscles. He used a flat, front lighting, and that gave him delicacy and subtlety of modelling, in which everything was seen and nothing lost in comprehensive shadows or mysterious vagueness. It is the fine draughtsman who explores psychological depths and finds the soul.

We learn from painters that next in difficulty to getting the inner personality of the sitter comes that of properly harmonising the background. A sketch or a drawing may quite well dispense with any sort of setting for the figure; but a painted portrait that is realised with any completeness demands an environment of some sort. The background is the artistic complement to the figure, and its purpose is to "set off" or "help out," to balance, to complete and to enhance. All this is achieved if only a field of modulated tone is employed; but painters have adopted every means from an almost plain backing to a realistically elaborated presentment of an interior. A favourite device has been a suggestion of landscape, and this offers a latitude of shapes, tones, and colour that more easily disarms criticism than a similar latitude would in an interior view. The pillars and curtains once so prevalent do not lend themselves to modern conditions of democratic portraiture; but they were a great help to painters of old in supplying a bold scheme of verticals and curves to secure strength and grace of design.

Rembrandt shows to what wonderful extent the background plays its part in the excellence of the pictorial result, emphasising or reducing contrast so that the contours of the figures are almost melted into the background in one place and sharply relieved at another. It was Leonardo who first recommended putting the lighter tone of the background against the dark side of an object and *vice versa*, and even the "merest tyro" would be alive to the beauty of the plan as seen in the relief to the Sobieski head. He might be prepared to say that the background in this case was lighter on the right of the head than on the left in accordance with the Leonardo precept. It is not —except slightly so in the angle below the moustache and close to the throat. But in maintaining his point he would be but

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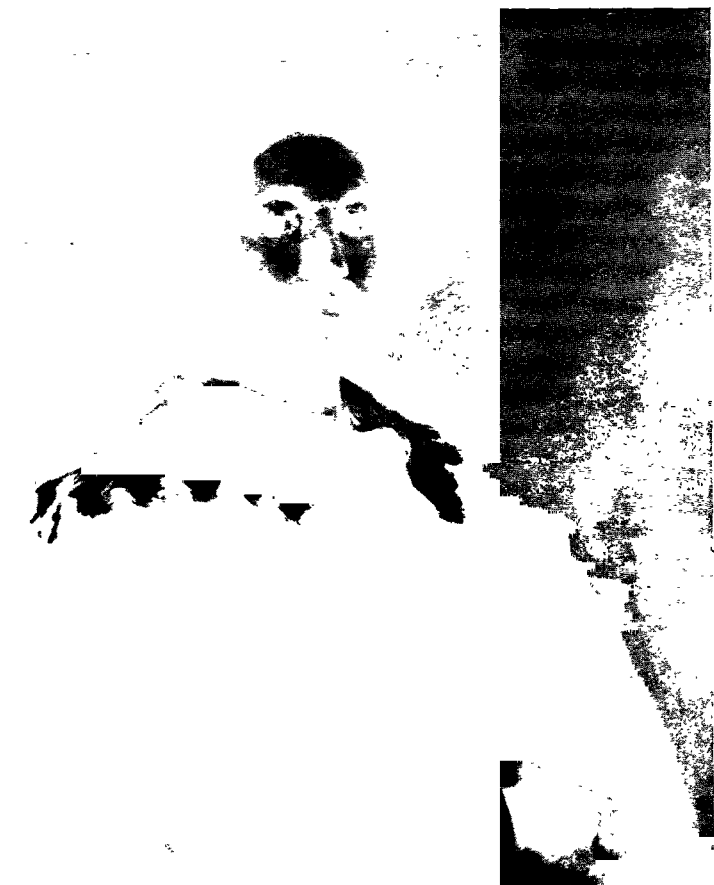
responding to the Leonardo idea exactly as Rembrandt intended. It is only by contrast with the darker tones around it that this angle appears as light as it does. The illusion is helped by the fact that *face* and *fur* give the contrast on one side and are also the agents on the other side to a different result. Cover up the head, and immediately all life and variety go out of the backing. Here, then, is a lesson in subtlety—an imagined contrast, not an actual one! The background relieves the head, and the head in turn animates the background. We see that it is unnecessary to go to the full limit of the Leonardo see-saw arrangement. A strongly modelled head, as this is, will force variety into the backing adjacent to it. This, however, would not happen with a plain flat support: the monotony of the whole area would kill the effect. It will be seen that the background tone here quickly darkens on either side as it gets farther from the head. On the left it gently gradates into the general low tone of the larger part. On the right there is a "feature" introduced before the gradation has got very far.

This feature is the concentration of dark tone which looks like the shadow cast by the king's hat. It is a ruse that is almost Rembrandt's own; for although it is seen in works by other painters, no one else so consistently employed it. Its effect is of great value in many ways. Chiefly it gives character to the background by disturbing the too smooth gradations. It also has the effect of "placing" the vertical plane behind the figure pretty definitely, converting what might have been a nebulous, smoky "beyond" into a wall on which the light, coming from some concentrated source, is sufficiently focussed to give a much-softened shadow of the hat. This wall idea is strengthened by the crack that has been deliberately painted into it. The crack alone would confirm the wall; but it is the shadow that determines its distance from the figure and thus calls up the notion of space.

We see the same effect in Sargent's portrait of Lord Ribblesdale in the National Gallery. In this, the background seems to combine the simplicity of the plain variety with the features of a scheme of verticals. A full-length is the most difficult of all schemes to manage because of the dominating vertical



LORD RIBBLESDALE  
SARGENT



JUAN DE PAREJA  
VLLASQUEZ

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note. The figure can only be harmonised by other vertical incidents.

This portrait, by the way, is remarkable in preserving psychological traits, which are usually strongest in force with heads and half-lengths. Watts's portrait heads excel in this respect.

In spite of numerous portrait backgrounds that are intentionally nothing but a backing—a wall-like limitation of vision close behind the figure—we cannot but admit the greater satisfaction in feeling that the figure is detached, having space all round it, even when a wall or a curtain does appear in the further background. The best painters always seem to have aimed at this spatial feeling; and the success which Rembrandt achieved by the method is shared by Velasquez, whose reputation as a portraitist is surpassed by none. With him the idea of space representation was evidently uppermost, as his wonderful interior groups at Madrid testify. They are well known in reproductions.

If the arguments that have been advanced respecting the merits of Impressionism are admitted, then the reputation of Velasquez as a pioneer in the synthetic method of vision undoubtedly appears. But in his finest portrait, the "Innocent X.," he has not submerged the analytical in the synthetic; though he did so in the case of the "Admiral Pulido da Pareja." This well-known work—attributed by some to his son-in-law Mazo—is a striking impression of a man standing in space. As a psychological record it is a little empty. We cannot say this of that other Pareja, the Moorish "handy-man" of Velasquez, who learnt to paint when his master was out of the way and became ultimately recognised as one of the master's best pupils, the other being Mazo above-mentioned. In the "Juan de Pareja" we see character and temperament almost as convincingly as in the "Innocent X." To look at the hair, at the broad lighting on the collar, and the beautiful assonance of the illumination on the body to that of the background, is to be aware of the added truths of Impressionism. These delights Holbein might have felt after and suggested, but could never have realised so completely, though he might have surpassed, perhaps, the psychological achieve-



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ment. The greatness of Velasquez seems to me to be due to this exquisite blend of the synthetic and the analytic. His lighting is full and searching enough to secure anatomical structure in sufficient amount and definition, though not so unsparingly as with the Early Flemings. On that account it is the better pictorially.

The conclusion is that this standard of equipoise in outlook and method is the only possible one for portraits. Whistler, Manet and others whose claims to portraiture rest upon impressionistic vision never produced a "human document"; their portraits are studies, "arrangements," in which the attempt to be Velasquez failed because they forgot or did not see their master's concern for and achievement in psychology.

If Holbein and Memling and Van Eyck had lived after Velasquez and shared his appreciation of tone values—what portraits we should have had!

Even in the superb "Van der Geest" of Van Dyck (1599-1641) there is not quite the homogeneity of Velasquez. Van Dyck concentrated upon the head more meticulously and for that reason we feel that all which is not the head is "support" or "setting" rather than part of the portrait. But we do not quarrel with Van Dyck's masterpiece on that account. Cornelius Van der Geest was an art expert and collector; a friend of Rubens; and here is plainly the gentleman of culture. It has been claimed for the eyes that they have never been surpassed in painting. In the original one sees a marvellously realistic rendering of that glistening humidity that often comes with approaching age. Van Dyck was one and twenty when he painted this masterpiece.

Recently two portraits by British painters have come into the light of public enjoyment in the National Gallery. One is "Martha, wife of Joshua Horton, Esq., of Sowerby." She died in 1694, which is a clue to the date of the unknown painter. No one can contemplate this excellent work without a feeling of intimate knowledge of the old lady; and there can surely be no higher praise. The other is by Joseph Highmore and is called "Gentleman in murrey brown velvet, 1747." It has sparkling animation, and in the painting of the coat and the silk waistcoat reaches the highest level of accomplishment.



CORNELIUS VAN DER GLEST  
VAN DYCK



THE PAINTER'S DAUGHTERS  
GAINSBOROUGH

## SUBJECT - MATTER

Both these, however, are devoid of impressionistic qualities ; but if we turn to Gainsborough's (1727-1788) portrait of his two little daughters we see momentary action cleverly caught. The little girls are stepping out to capture a butterfly. Manet's impressions never excelled this seizure of movement, and there is an equally rapid registration of youthful charm and ingenuousness in the faces. It is, of course, a sketch, but the fundamental work is so sound that it is not possible to believe that it would have lost anything by being carried further.

But it must not be forgotten that impressionistic effects are not essentials of portraiture. They necessarily emphasise the momentary. In the case of two little girls who have not yet attained to a life-history the action seized by Gainsborough is more in harmony with the general spirit than a seated pose would be, for that could offer nothing more charming in childhood than demureness. But your grave and reverend signor certainly demands serenity. Even youthful manhood requires some suggestion of the responsibilities of life. Portraits of men which depict flippancy or triviality are at a great disadvantage. One of the most successful portraits in existence in many respects is the "Portrait of a Sculptor," by Del Sarto (1486-1531)—at one time said to be a likeness of the artist, whom it somewhat resembles. Though showing mental animation it is quiet and earnest. This work appears as our frontispiece, and is worthy of study by reason of its faultless placing of the figure in the field of the canvas and the strong and simple beauty of its lines. No one has ever surpassed the supreme rightness of its spacing.

With regard to groups, it would appear that the greatest difficulty lies in the direction of a proper unity of interest. It is not at all easy, even with but two or three figures having equal claims to prominence, to combine them satisfactorily in one picture. To suppress one of them by any available means would be fatal to the painter's interests. He has to put them all practically on one plane, and to give each something like a fair share of lighting.

To secure a proper unity of purpose in the sitters the great masters saw to it that every member of the group was actuated by a common interest. Few painters, excepting Rembrandt,

have been so deft at this as Franz Hals (1580-1666), who seemed to like tackling such problems.

His several groups of "Officers of the Archers of St. George" are evidence of his successful ingenuity in this respect. Nevertheless, to compare his "Governors of the St. Elizabeth Hospital" (Haarlem) with Rembrandt's "Syndics of the Cloth Merchants" (Amsterdam) is to see how the greater master, by the simple device of making his sitters look outward towards him, gave his group even more unity, thereby securing more repose for his picture than Hals achieved for his.

Before leaving the subject of Portraiture it might be of interest to allude to a popular puzzle with regard to the eyes of portraits. One often hears expressions of surprise that eyes can be so painted as to appear to follow the spectator as he moves about. The spectator usually thinks it inexplicable and uncanny. I have never seen this matter explained, but, of course, it is simple enough. The artist in such cases has caused the sitter to look into his own eyes; and if the spectator were seated opposite as the painter was, he would have the same eye-to-eye gaze. When he moves away he disregards the fact that the painting is a flat, not a solid thing like a real head, and that therefore any angle at which the canvas is seen cannot alter the relative position and relationship of its parts, as they would be altered were it a real head. Wherever the spectator goes, so long as he can see the picture at all, he naturally sees that same eye-to-eye view which is fixed unalterably in the painting. But he forgets about the two-dimensional facts and expects the three-dimensional, and says, "When I was directly opposite those eyes they looked into mine: now that I have moved they still look into mine. They must have followed me."



THE GOVERNORS OF THE ST. ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

FRANZ HALS

*By courtesy of Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd*



THE SYNDICS OF THE CLOTH MERCHANTS

REMBRANDT

*By courtesy of Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd*

*101115 1914*



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MEDIUM OF EXPRESSION

**F**OR want of a better term, the word "medium" is used in art phraseology to indicate the agency of communication between the artist and his public. It is rather loosely applied. It may indicate the general classifications such as sculpture, painting, engraving, and so forth ; or it may distinguish particular processes in each of those classifications, as bronze, marble, oil, water-colour, etching, mezzotint, etc. In painting, the word is specifically used to denote further varieties of execution, and in each of those varieties, the particular "vehicle" in which colours are held in solution.

It would be appropriate, if this were a technical work for artists, to state and describe all the mediums in which the Fine Arts are executed ; but such a course is quite beyond the occasion in a book offered to those who are the artists' public. It will be enough if some leading facts are given as a help to the reader in properly estimating first the aims and resources of genius and next how such resources react to the material employed. Nor will it be necessary to make mention of every description of work, since some are too obsolete and unimportant to be more than mere names to-day ; whilst others, like goldsmithery, jewellery, enamelling and several more processes which involve the help of an artist in a craft, do not come sufficiently within the scope of the ordinary person to justify space in a popular book. We shall therefore deal with a selection of processes comprising the best known and most generally employed mediums of execution, saying no more about them than common knowledge, short of specialised technics, would command.

### ARCHITECTURE

In deference to a widespread idea that Architecture should come first, I take it and dispose of it first.



## THE LURE OF THE FINE ARTS

If the delightful metaphor that Architecture is the Mother of the Arts arose when Sculpture and Painting were almost the only arts recognised as fine, we may accept it as meaning that Architecture brings forth Sculpture and Painting as occasion arises for their employment in building. But if the saying is a serious claim to a developmental priority I, for one, cannot subscribe to it. As we have already seen in earlier parts of this book, man made images and painted pictures of a sort while he was yet a cave dweller or a denizen of the forest. He may have increased the amenities of his dwelling by scooping out more earth or by lodging tree-boughs against a support ; but this would be little more than an obedience to instinct, in which respect the architecture of the mole would surpass his immeasurably in organised complexity. The term architect is not properly ascribed until man actually employs tools to make buildings out of tree trunks, and by that time he has advanced a great way in other arts.

In any case Architecture does not seem to me to be, strictly speaking, a fine art at all (*pace* Michelangelo, who took to it when he was too old to paint and carve). Its design arises purely from utility, and what is not exclusively useful in a perfect building is ornamental. To design ornaments for an edifice is the work of the artist, as is the sculpture and the painting. We cannot even attribute the traditions and conventions of the various styles to architects *per se*, but only to the craftsmen employed by the architect, who may, of course, be himself a supreme artist. A Parthenon could only be produced in this way ; and if it is claimed that measurement, proportion, structure, permanence, material, stress, thrust, and all the other matters of moment in Architecture, together make it the leading or "chief" art, we are still in order in saying that these matters appertain to the carpenter, the mason, the engineer, and thus remain within the scope of the crafts. What is left in Architecture on which to claim that it is Fine Art escapes my scrutiny.

All this notwithstanding, it is unavoidable that the restraint and grand simplicity of ancient Greek building should be recognised as a result of the ideality that governed their finest achievements in sculpture. The Greek temple of stone was

probably a sublimated survival of the god's shelter in wood. It was not a place of public worship ; all such ceremonies were conducted in the courtyard between outer walls. The temple was therefore, as a rule, comparatively small. Any handbook of architecture will give information as to the plan and "orders" relating to the subject. Here it is only necessary to consider its admirable principles. They involve the utmost simplicity of construction, and from that results their dignified beauty. The idea of the column as an element is one that few, if any, other people have evolved. What inspired it ? Some say a human form ; some, a tree stem. Either archetype would hold qualities of strength and grace which the Greek mind would be quick to seize and employ. The human figure may indeed have been the source of inspiration ; the flutings of the Doric column have been said to be derived from the straight, falling folds of the "chiton." It is an idea that pleases the fancy, and Vitruvius elaborates it. If the Dorians, when they invaded the Peloponnesus, brought the column with them it must have been already developed in their own misty Pelasgic past. The archaic statue of Hera, found at Samos, is little more than a pillar fluted into such folds as a loosely hanging garment could be generalised into ; and, moreover, in the famous Caryatides of the Erechtheum, and those of the Cnidian Treasury at Delphi, we have actual figures fulfilling the purpose of columns.

So limited were the uses of the Greek temple and so consistent its form that it may almost have been intentionally a receptacle for the sculptural art it harboured. It is the very antithesis of the fretted gothic House of God in which the actual stones of structure are pierced and carved. In the classic temple the walls are one thing and the sculpture another. Pediment, frieze, and metopes alone contain statuary, the rest is plain with the choicest ornament restricted to a few places. Yet when those chief areas are stripped of their wealth there still remain the noble ranks of columns and the simple but perfect skyline of the low gable. And this elemental plan of structure has come down through the ages and penetrated into every land, still holding against all progressive opposition its power of impressiveness, its strength and its grace ; whilst the

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ornaments of its mouldings and capitals have supplied the whole world for all time with unsurpassable motives of decoration.

In all but its engineering triumphs, Roman architecture was a development of the Greek. Its temples and theatres were aggrandised versions of Hellenic models. For the triumphal arches alone can Rome claim originality, and they were built up of Greek elements combined with the arch of the Etruscans. Of the utilitarian wonders of Roman construction, the viaducts, aqueducts, and circuses it is not within our province to speak.

So much involved in the general development of Europe are the changes that followed the decline of classic influence that it becomes necessary to treat of them in the manner of a brief historical sketch.

The term, "Early Christian Art," is applied to the Art of Western Christendom. Whilst Rome still embraced Paganism, Christianity was practised in the hiding-places of the city. Such were the underground galleries known as Catacombs, which were used as sepulchres. The paintings and sculptures that decorate these retreats have for subject-matter scriptural episodes and allegories.

Roman Art was partly a reflection from the Greek and partly an indigenous growth springing from Etruria. But Etruscan Art itself was largely influenced by Greek. Great quantities of painted terra-cotta vases were imported from Athens, for the Etruscans were appreciative and wealthy. Rome became a rich treasury of works of art raided from Greece and Asia Minor, and although the architecture of theatres and temples followed Greek ideas, yet the amazing resources of the Romans took architecture more and more into the domain of pure utility.

But the centre of Eastern Christianity was at Byzantium, a name which was changed to Constantinople when Constantine rebuilt the city in 330. The Art fostered by the Greek Church is known as Byzantine. It was Greek Art Orientalised, and was confined to reliefs, mosaics, paintings, and embroideries—in order not to simulate the idols and images of the pagans by producing statues in the round—and further it avoided the representation of the human figure unclothed. As a consequence it lost the last shreds of the classic traditions

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upon which it had been founded. The Christian Greeks applied and developed the principle of the dome in their churches, and Byzantine architecture rose to great dignity and beauty. The surfaces of its interiors were embellished with coloured marbles and mosaics. But the Art of these decorations is primitive and mystic. Its beauty is of two kinds only ; one is that of the ornament it derived from Persian and Arab traditions ; the other that of the sensuous kind that mere profusion of colour and gold can occasion. Herein lies the one charm of the great mosaics that gleam and glitter in the basilicas of Rome and Ravenna and the Byzantine churches of Constantinople and Venice.

The influence of Byzantium was a far-reaching one of barbaric magnificence. Its style and manner flourished in Greece, Turkey, and Russia. It was a decadence rather than a development, and although it produced many specimens of ivory carvings and reliefs that show great skill and feeling, yet the Art of the stupendously great empire was dead within. It spread wherever the faith spread, but as a formula merely. Not until Nature again touched the hearts of men did Art take new life and beauty.

Art in the West of Europe after Charlemagne is known as "Romance" or "Romanesque" Art. The term "Gothic" has nothing to do with the Goths. It was originally applied by the Italians to things not Roman in character or origin, as a disparagement. It was regularised later as indicating the Art that followed the romanesque in France.

The ecclesiastical architecture of Western Christianity developed in two directions from the Roman basilica, an oblong building with a double colonnade, used as a court of justice and an exchange. In the south it produced the romanesque church, with its ample wall space and few windows : the required conditions for sunny lands. In the more northern countries it produced the gothic church, with its ample window space : the requirement of lands with cloudy skies. The walls of romanesque churches thus lent themselves to adornment of gold and colours in mosaic ; the windows of the gothic churches were filled with coloured glass, for their wall space offered little occasion for painting.

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Gothic architecture differs in one great structural essential from classic and romanesque. The Egyptian pyramid, the Greek temple and the Roman basilica were static ; their weight being safely deposited upon their supports. A more dynamic idea obtained in the gothic church ; an apparent endeavour to escape from the weighty nature of stone and to use it as a vehicle for strain and thrust rather than as direct support. Vaulting could not be supported by the walls weakened by window spaces ; it had to find resistance along the lines of flying buttresses carried outside the walls. Thus gothic building has always proved more perishable than any other kind ; but its miraculous structure and airy lightness is a compensating fascination. The Pyramids will stand practically unaltered when scarcely an original stone of gothic remains in the world.

### SCULPTURE

In the Fine Arts proper we shall find evidence of that curious controlling factor which, in the beginning, I likened to an electric current animating manikins. It is difficult to isolate, but we can see that it must be the result of various agencies : first of all, perhaps, the impulse to do something with one's hands. To resort once more to the primitive, it is obvious that with a yielding lump of earth in the hand the impulse would be to mould it, fascinated by the fact that its form obeyed the fingers, remaining unchanged except under their action. Since Sculpture admittedly accepts moulding into its classification, we must perforce give it priority in the arts.

The lump of clay in the hands inevitably leads to a resulting shape of some sort ; and if that shape does not strike the moulder as an echo of something his eyes have seen before, it probably stirs some latent resemblance which impels him to improve the likeness. The possibility of moulding or modelling once established, its meritorious exercise depends upon the subject's observation and memory of the things he chooses to model quite as much as upon this manipulative skill. Something in the likeness of a man or an animal would certainly command the first efforts in early epochs. For although our own children build sand castles and cut trenches, the

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infants of the ages knew nothing of such things. Men and animals, being animate, would obsess their consciousness most strongly, because the immediate concerns of life were related to other men and animals.

Thus, the *impulse* to create comes about by the *means* to create. We shall see shortly how important a part this impulse plays in art developments. Next, the response of the artificer to his surroundings will differentiate his results from those of others, even at such an early stage ; individuality increasing as the work goes farther on the road with complexity and elaboration. Individuality will only be stultified by religious and tribal exactions inexorably organised, as with the Egyptians.

Another factor in the primal impulse will be the contest between the realism demanded by the artist's observation of natural objects and his strong instinct for symmetry. The fusion of these two impulses has a typical result in the interesting device of three circles at the points of a triangle on an Aztec sculptured stone to represent a face. This dual motive is apparent in all first efforts. One cannot say, of course, how far the symmetry impulse either includes or suggests the decorative ; but this design exists cut in stone, not as a unit in a decorative scheme, but as the head of a figure standing alone. Moreover, early attempts at decoration on utensils and arms are usually in the form of notches or lines.



All this is as likely to have preceded as to have been concurrent with the application of Art to religious needs. There is no doubt that the governing factor in early Art was religious observance ; but side by side with this there ran the domestic opportunities which would leave the field freer for the exercise of the beauty sense—at first only manifested in ornament by repetition and symmetry. In the end primitive Art would have been governed by impulses on the lines of creative desire, imitation, realism, symmetry, ornamentation, and religion, each of them motive enough to carry Art far in the course of

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evolution and each strong enough to exert its own stimulation upon the mind of the artificer and thus produce individuality.

As in the course of centuries these impulses gain fuller and freer play, the advancing eras show differences of style due to variety in civilisation, and particularly to the material available for the artist. Here are another pair of factors. They are sometimes revealed by their degree of *non*-fusion, as in the difference between the great religious, official art of Greece in marble and bronze, and the small clay images of Tanagra, which are of an entirely different *genre* and deal with the charming trifles of domestic life realistically and not idealistically.

Individual response to these several factors and numerous conditions brings about a following by minds less strongly individual, and style becomes a matter of communities and "schools" as well as of races and nations. The supreme artist, if he is recognised, inevitably dominates ; and so phases come and go.

Among the several mediums of the Fine Arts it must be admitted that sculpture in the round exerts the most irresistible stimulus upon the general mind. I do not mean that it is a more popular art, but that it is more easily apprehended if not more enjoyed. It is so because it is three-dimensional. The cubic idea being the earliest awakened, directness of imitation in sculpture involves no translation and no interpretation beyond perhaps that of scale ; whereas painting involves several complex and obscure mental processes not equally easy to all people. It follows that sculpture has a universal appeal as against the partial appeal of painting. The merit and enjoyment of a work, be it understood, is quite independent of this appeal, which is purely concerned with its tangibility and the force of its appearance as solid like the object it represents. It does not follow that sculpture thereby takes a long step towards illusion ; but, nevertheless, "roundness" has its primitive recommendations of which we are but subconsciously aware, and which are, of course, not reckoned with in a reasonable criticism of a work of art. It may be this primitive bias, the legacy of undeveloped faculties, that impels our modernist sculptors to produce things to which enlightened minds cannot give a name—at least not a complimentary one—







THE MADONNA AND HOLY INFANT  
MICHI LANGFLO

*(From a photograph made and kindly lent by Col. Arthur Hill, of Selham)*

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as well as things which are a deliberate "hark-back" to the products of savagery.

The three-dimensional character is overpowering in works of colossal scale ; at life-size it is dignified by reason of its very twinship with life ; and in a small scale it has that charm of preciousness which the miniature exerts. No painted work, however forcefully relieved, can match sculptures in this material force of presentment which plays so nearly to the edge of illusion without overstepping the limit. When and if it does, by means of colour, it assumes other characteristics than those of Art, and becomes at once submerged in new concepts of life and the world. This is not to say that a statue painted to give the illusion of life is necessarily inartistic in itself.\* We can imagine even Michelangelo's Madonna at Bruges being so coloured. Nothing could be easier ; but what would happen in such a case is that we should be thinking of the Virgin and the Child as beings, and wondering what they were doing seated among candlesticks—we should not think first of the majestic grace of the figures, the largeness of style, the compactness of the design, the beauty of the Child and the sedate modesty of the Virgin. And yet these qualities are the very conditions of the work's utter remoteness from the mundaneness of a living mother and child.

Michelangelo's beautiful work, though not a single figure, is a single "motive" nevertheless—a monolith. Perhaps because of this very "roundness" there seems to be difficulty in combining separate statues into a composition, for there is nothing in the shape of background and setting such as painting supplies. Reliefs are a kind of compromise in this respect ; but they, of course, involve almost as many conventions and complex mental processes as does painting, and therefore the impressibility due to three-dimensions is weakened, because the impression is not a single and pure one but complicated by pictorial ideas and literary content.

Where groups in the round have met with some success it is less on account of the relationship of the figures than of their

\* Prof. Berenson, in "Venetian Painters," p. 31, mentions Donatello's bust of Niccolò d'Uzanno, "coloured like nature, and succeeds so well in producing for an instant the effect of actual life as to seem uncertain the next moment."

merits considered separately. The "Calais Burghers," of Rodin, exemplifies this. Perhaps the best achievement in group interest is reached in such later Greek statuary as the "Farnese Bull," at Naples, which has homogeneity as well, less fortunately, as a sensationalism and violence of action. Group statuary usually suffers from either fussiness as a whole or a disconnection of parts. Another famous group seems to me to share the same demerit; I refer to the Laocoon, in which I am impressed more by posturing than by agony and fear. For the strangling has not yet begun. If the *monstrum horrendum* had been round the throat of the father, the action would have had more justification. There is also to my mind, a disparity of scale in the work. The sons have the size of boys and the figures of men: either that, or the father is a colossus.

Reliefs are ostensibly panel fillings, and as such necessarily defer somewhat to the restrictions of flat design. May we not take it that Michelangelo felt such restrictions a curb to his flights of conception, since his greatest work is all in the form of isolated pieces?

Low reliefs offer the sculptor inducements towards graphic pictorialism. When the relief is so low as scarcely to be felt above the level of the background plane, it nearly approaches the effect of an inlay. Its delicate nuances suggest distance and often result not only in linear but aerial perspective. The doors of the Baptistery, Florence, are marvels of achievement in this respect. They are quite as much graphic as plastic art.

When we consider reliefs—even high reliefs—we are conscious of leaving behind that *sense of being* which the round and detached sculpture evokes. The background plane is a claim on the part of Art against Life. Try as we will, we cannot convincingly accept a restored version of the Parthenon pediment as a group; it is always an assemblage of beautiful figures.

Sculpture, perhaps because of its elemental character, does not present many varieties of presentation. It is either moulded or carved; but when it finally reaches its completion as a work of art in either wood, bronze, some sort of stone, ivory, or one of the more precious metals, its material does not seem to have made any fundamental difference in its Form,

though scale and the amenability of the material naturally leave their mark.

The origin of sculpture is lost in a remote and misty antiquity. We learn of metal-working in Homer; and the elaborate description of the designs upon the shield of Achilles would lead to an expectation of highly developed means and skill in the prehistoric days of which the poet sung. But the earliest images of which Pausanias tells us are usually of wood, and they were preserved with veneration right up to his time, that is to say, to the second century A.D. But these wooden images are sometimes little more than mere blocks. The invention of modelling figures in clay, which Pliny attributes to a potter of Corinth, led naturally to bronze casting, although the hammering and joining of metals was perhaps an earlier method still. "This is the work of Glaucus of Chios, the inventor of the soldering of iron; and each plate of the stand is joined to the next, not with pins or rivets, but with solder alone." Thus, Pausanias (X. 16), who also describes a statue of Zeus as "the oldest of all works in bronze; for it is not wrought all of one piece, but each part is separately beaten out and all are held together by rivets that they may not fall asunder." (III. 17). Whether there is any detailed account by classic writers of bronze-casting as a process, my limited facilities for research have not been able to discover; but as, in principle, it cannot vary much from one age to another, we may get a fair idea of its difficulty and the risks attending it from works nearer our own time. That metal-casting, when the work is large and complicated, is a very expert craft we may infer from the difficulty the great Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1572) experienced with his "Perseus." I quote from a footnote given in his transporting "Memoirs." "This statue was intended to be of bronze, five ells in height, of one piece, and hollow. Cellini first formed his model of clay more slender than the statue was intended to be. He then baked it, and covered it with wax of the thickness of a finger, which he modelled into the perfect form of the statue. In order to effect in concave what the wax represented in convex, he covered the wax with clay, and baked this second covering. Thus, the wax dissolving, and escaping by fissures left open for the pur-

pose, he obtained between the first model and the second covering a space for the introduction of the metal. In order to introduce the bronze without moving the first model, he gently placed the model in a pit dug under the furnace, and by means of pipes and apertures in the model itself he introduced the liquid metal." The account of the poor man's anxieties, which reduced him to a fever; his drastic efforts with the furnace, which set the house afire; and the final triumph which cured him and amazed his despondent men, to say nothing of the doubting duke, will be remembered.

It is certain that the Greeks knew the properties of gypsum, for Pliny says that the first artist who took plaster casts of the human face from the original and introduced the practice of working over a wax model taken from the plaster was Lysistratus (fourth century B.C.), the brother of Lysippus. He also discovered how to take casts from statues, we are further told.

The oldest statue in stone still preserved to us is that of the famous upright lions over the Mycenæ gate: they are well known by casts. Before the general use of marble the Ancient Greeks employed wood overlaid with gold and ivory. This method, known as "chryselephantine," was that adopted for the colossal statues of Athena in the Parthenon and of Zeus at Olympia. Phidias (490-432 B.C.), whose work they were, was accused of peculation in regard to the gold used on the Parthenon statue. Plutarch's account of the charge is given in Appendix II.

It is interesting to learn that these chryselephantine statues gave a little trouble by shrinkage in the dry air, and by mould from the damp. Pausanias alludes to a black pavement in front of the image of the Olympian Zeus. "This black pavement is surrounded by a border of Parian marble, which keeps in the oil which streams from the statue. For it is oil which is best fitted to preserve the statue at Olympia, and protects the ivory from damage from the marshy atmosphere of the Altis. But in the case of the so-called Parthenos on the Acropolis of Athens it is not oil but water which keeps the ivory sound. For since the Acropolis is dry, owing to its great height, the statue, being made of ivory, requires water and the moisture which water gives. At Epidaurus, when I enquired as to the

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reason why they put neither water nor oil into the Æsculapius, the attendants of the temple told me that both the image of the god and his throne stood over a well." (V. 10.)

In later times gold and ivory were less abundant and the marbles came into general use: the Pentelic obtained in Attica, and the Parian from the island of Paros. Colour and texture effects were obtained by the use, in one work, of several different marbles, such as alabaster and porphyry, also of metals variously coloured and alloyed. "We look with pleasure," wrote Plutarch, "on the statue of Jocasta, in whose countenance the artist is said to have mixed some silver, in order that the bronze might receive the appearance of a human being passing away in death."

This question of colour in antique art is of such importance and interest that it has not been either possible or desirable to avoid giving it a rather lengthy discussion. To my mind, there is only one summing up of the difficulties. It is that the Greek mind, whilst ever eager to progress, yet strongly revered tradition. Both ideas were entertained simultaneously. There was no aiming at illusive realism.

Evidences came to light as recently as 1883 in the shape of primitive fragmentary statues of women, the robes of which were still brightly painted in elaborate patterns. These remains were found in a corner of the Acropolis at Athens, where as archaic *débris* they had been filled in to level up the earth. They had therefore been accidentally and fortunately preserved, but their colour crumbled off in dust in a few hours.\*

It is assumed by some that certain untooled spaces on the Parthenon Frieze are portions originally coloured in a way auxiliary to the chiselling. The surmise is that where hands appear in actions of holding an object and there is no carven trace of such object, the missing article was painted on the plain background of the relief. The explanation is ingenious, but will hardly stand the strain of the difference between two- and three-dimensional representation as seen by the eye from different view-points. Besides, if sandals are carved why not

\* "Recent Discoveries of Painted Greek Sculpture," by Russell Sturgis, *Harper's Magazine*, Sept., 1890.

their straps : if a hand, why not the thyrsus it should hold ? The question is not so easily settled.

There is, however, no doubt remaining that the marbles were always fully coloured ; the question is, with what intention was it done ? Plato, Pliny, Plutarch and others make definite references to the practice ; the paintings and mosaics of Herculaneum illustrate statues, on bases, coloured as though they were living people, and there is the well-known wall-painting that represents a lady artist colouring a statue from a pattern or guide at her feet, with her paraphernalia around her.

All these allusions by classic writers to colouring, whether for realistic purposes or not, as well as the surviving evidences of such practice by the Ancient Greeks, point to a condition of artistic taste entirely different from our own. For us, the least approach to illusion is a misfortune, if not a solecism in Art. How is the Greek outlook to be explained ? How are we to reconcile it with the severe avoidance of any expression of emotion in the Phidian masterpieces ? The statue of Jocasta mentioned by Plutarch was made by Silanion, an artist of the fourth century B.C. and of the Attic school, and therefore under the full influence of the Periclean traditions.

If I dared attempt an explanation I should say that the difference in point of view is due entirely to the fact that to us the realism that deliberately intends illusion has been attempted often and frequently with a near approach to success. That success we know, by virtue of the experience of the ages, to be deleterious to the loftiest aims of Art. The Ancient Greek did not know this. He lived when Art was a new, not an old aspiration. For him the highest and best was still to be striven for ; and what shape it would take he could only conjecture. His amazing receptiveness, his ample and full response to natural fact, his love of novelty, his daily triumphs of skill all urged him forward upon any line that might lead to fresh resources. To study Nature, to create his works on the data Nature offered and yet always to seek Nature's own ideal were his greatest incentives. By no other incentives had his art advanced from shapeless blocks and grinning Apollos to such triumphs of realism as the draperies of the "Victory" of Samothrace. He could not see, as we do, that in less inspired

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minds and less skilful hands than his own, devotion to realism would divorce Art from idealism and draw it down to the commonplace. In his own hands realism was innocuous for two reasons. One was that in regard to colour it was immensely far from any possibility of an actual illusion : and the other, that it was an experimental realism, seductive but not betraying, because his idealism was still so much the greater force that it suffered nothing and only turned to the loftiest account any realism it assimilated. This sense of beauty in all that related to form gave him a god-like and child-like confidence. He could take risks with impunity. He *was* an idealist, and knew it and felt no doubt of himself. Though he tinted his pediments he did so ingenuously, carrying the experiment as far as his unevolved colour sense and his few primitive pigments could go. And he saw to it that the sublimity of his idealism remained uninfluenced, unspoiled by whatever came adventitiously to co-operate with it : so that, qualify his form as he might, its strength overcame all germs of dissolution lurking unseen and unsuspected. And his confidence was justified. We do not actually see, read of, or imagine any works down to the days of Lysippus that were discounted by downright realism, either in the direction of colouring or of facial expression.

There is a story by Pliny of the mixing of iron with copper in order that iron rust might redden the copper to produce the effect of a blush of shame on the face of a bronze statue. But the story is fantastic and quite discredited. We must note, moreover, the absence of any subsequent evidence that colouring of statues by any method was further developed by the Greeks. In the later Rhodian work danger from illusion came insidiously with the realism of carving that was acclaimed as it appeared ; for the old temple traditions of Athens were by then outworn, and statuary concerned itself with other beings than gods. Pergamon had succeeded Athens.

From the death of Alexander, 323 B.C., to the Roman Conquest, 146 B.C., Hellenic Art bears the changed name of "Hellenistic," to mark a period in which the Hellenic serenity was left behind and the portrayal of more diversified types with their passions and emotions showed further realism.



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Outer nature became a field for art effort, even landscape finding representation. In all things the Greek striving for beauty remained.

Hellenistic Art developed according to the predilections of Alexander's vast worlds, and Oriental ideas were part of the mental make-up of the empire. The realism of the Laocoon typifies the real development, for it lay in the representation by form of the human emotions : its colour, if coloured it was, is remarked upon by no commentator whatever. And that is a fact applying to coloured statuary in general. Form and gesture—and chiefly the latter—concern all the classic critics and writers ; colour is referred to only in a few cases, and then in a way that puts it on the plane of a negligible convention. When it is reported by Pliny that Praxiteles, being asked, admitted to preferring those of his works that Nicias had touched-up (*circumlitio* = smeared over) we can be sure that the process was a subsidiary one ; since although Nicias was a painter of reputation, Praxiteles is not likely to have handed over his works to an auxiliary to complete if that completion were anything more than a mere "toning" or "finish." Such finish may be regarded perhaps as a survival of the fuller and more primitive colouring of archaic custom. It is reasonable to assume that the statuary of the Attic and "transitional" periods was painted "archaistically" ; that is, in deference to tradition reaching down from the days of archaic wooden images of the gods, just as the image of Athena in the Parthenon was sculptured archaistically by Phidias.

The Greeks perceived that the limitations of sculpture were its strength. In pursuing the beauties of form and the allurements of the living figure they did not abandon thought and theory. Their conventions were governed by the material in which they worked. Every material, every medium, has its one method for its best results. The finest essence of Art is this inner, almost unperceived, sense of propriety and rightness, which keeps clear the different threads of reasoning through all sensuous delights, and finds in the circumstances of material on the one hand and the phenomena of Nature on the other—the outward and the inward—that happy point where the artist's means and natural beauty embrace in consummation.

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And yet we have colour again, more realistic than ever, in the portrait busts of the Renaissance !

The anomaly of painted sculpture must be left at this point as a mystery inexplicable to the modern mind. It is not the only one in the history of Art. There is, for example, that Egyptian tradition of seating the commemorative figures as though they were partly unwrapped mummies and not living beings ; whilst the tomb statuettes exhibit the most lively action. The reader is no doubt acquainted with this characteristic of Egyptian sculpture from specimens and illustrations. He will have noticed that the figures of Egyptian statues, reliefs, incised slabs, and papyrus paintings are generalised into mere symbols or types, little more than silhouettes, the shapes of which, however, exhibit a love for clean, smooth contours. The human form in Egyptian Art, especially of the later period, has a certain elegance combined with its relentless conventionality. But the special peculiarity to be noted is one that has been called the "law of frontality." Seldom is there to be found a figure in profile which does not show the shoulders at a full-face view ; no figure stands or sits without both feet firmly on the ground ; no woman or child is represented but with the legs pressed together in their close garments.\*

That such methods should have remained in force for thousands of years is a testimony to the strength of the convention and tradition which governed and arrested the development of Egyptian Art.

In Assyrian sculpture there are few examples in the round. Reliefs and tinted surfaces, made up of clay slabs or of enamelled brickwork, in default of stone, are the prevailing methods. The Assyrian work is vigorous, muscular, and mercilessly materialistic, evincing a high estimation of brute force. Anatomical detail and fair but sturdy proportion are pressed into service in representations of the pomp and cruelty of barbarous kings.

\* Nevertheless, there is on loan, at present, in the British Museum, two wall paintings (transcripts) from Thebes tombs, one of which (2150 B.C.) shows a woman making cakes, and the other (1420 B.C.) a maiden dressing her mistress. In both, the law of frontality is unobserved. In the latter case the maiden's figure is in profile, displaying back and bosom, and the legs parted, though there is only one arm. This example shows a distinct advance upon the first in observation and execution.

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The Art of the Egyptian and Babylonian era was more continuous than that of the Minoan dynasty in Crete, but promised and achieved less in spite of its astounding skill and technical perfection. It commenced about 4000 B.C., but, long as it lasted, its immense areas remained merely filled with figures all on one plane, without the least attempt at composition; and perspective is only signified by the conventional ruse of placing one thing above another.

In Greece such obsessions were impossible. The intolerance of any kind of moral bondage enabled the Greek to go rapidly from one step to the next. About 620 B.C. is the date assigned to his first attempts at carving a figure—little more than a shapeless block. Influenced by Egyptian and Assyrian Art, Greece developed from the stage of archaic grinning gods to that of perfection of form in about 250 years.

Not until Greek Art ripened do we find any expression of beauty for its own sake. Being clear of the imperial and sacerdotal impositions that had choked expression in other countries, the Art of the Hellenes worked towards the portrayal of what was most vital to it, and that was an interest in the inner and outer man. Gods and heroes formed its subject-matter: the one theme supplying a psychological content and the other a physical, but over all is the evidence of men taking joy in bodily beauty and fitness. The Greek sculptor took Assyrian muscularity and weight and sublimated them into dynamic force: he strengthened Egyptian suavity into a grace of power.

The best examples of the ideal occur in the sculpture of the age of Pericles. Here we see the human as divine as the Ancient Greeks could make it. Men and women realistically as individuals it rarely represented, except in the terra-cotta figurines made for the home. In the great works mankind at its best was the theme; the human form, perfect, serene, beautiful, stirred by no passion, suffering no physical strain, always powerful. The moment of action was never more than suggested. Usually it was just past, or about to commence: Venus preparing for the bath, the Discobolus about to hurl the disc, Zeus and Athene tranquil and majestic. The face was never made to betray strong emotion. The young horsemen

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of the Parthenon frieze ride composedly in their great procession, Demeter sits at peace with her fate. Never surprise, never anger, never alarm, have these gods and goddesses in the conscious sublimity of their estate.

There is in all this an overawing indifference ; a sublime contentment. It is the perfect moral equipoise whereby all emotions are neutralised into a supernal peace and pleasure in existence. Immortality and omnipotence make all things possible. Eagerness, struggle, triumph and despair are for mortals only.

But even Greek sculpture gradually drew away from this gentle and mighty decorum. As sculptors multiplied, their outlook on life found beauty in a less strict idealism. Praxiteles (fourth century B.C.) allowed his Hermes to support the baby Dionysus with a slight betrayal of solicitous interest in expression. He added to the ideality of firm contours a touch of realistic allurements in suggesting the texture of skin and hair, and the weight of flesh. His son Cephisodotus, also a sculptor, made a group which Pliny tells us won much praise because "the pressure of the fingers seems to be exerted on flesh rather than marble."

Later still, grief, which was the first emotion to find suggestion—in the "stele" or grave memorials, and then always with restraint—grief became agonised ; struggle and action won more and more representation until the great work, "Laocoon," reached the climax of human woe, in a heartrending group of a father and two sons in the deathly toils of serpents. This was realism as far as Hellenistic Art could compass it. From this time the godlike sublimity which sculpture had so impressively conveyed at its first period of perfection was for ever a thing of the past. Michelangelo strove for it, but his figures are not serene, untroubled gods : they are giants sublime in silent anguish, themselves oppressed by gods. Mighty they are, fateful and sublime, but their serenity is the resignation of despair.

Yet in the great works of Michelangelo—his Moses, David, his brooding princes, and writhing slaves—there is still more of the ideal than the real. They are not presentments of immediate physical torture as are the figures of the "Laocoon" ; they are tormented in soul by a fate we can but guess at.

Politics and international strife counted less in Art to the Greeks than it did to the Assyrians, who schemed their reliefs to serve as everlasting intimidations. The Greek rejoiced in his victory over the Persians because it bore witness to the prowess which safeguarded life and liberty.

In the architectural groups of such commemorative statuary, Hellenic Art was the first to employ principles of composition with artistic intent ; and it did so by beginning at the beginning—that is, with symmetry. The Greeks *designed* the filling of the pediments or gable ends of their temples instead of spreading the figures equally over a wall space with no attempt at any significance in their relative positions. This was an immense advance upon Assyrian and Egyptian modes. The Greeks fitted their figures to the different heights of the triangular space of the pediment. In the temple of Aphaia at Ægina, and the temple of Zeus at Olympia, the standing figure faces us at the place of greatest height, and on each side the postures of the fighting figures are more and more bent as they are further removed from the centre. The end ones in the horizontal space left in the angle are recumbent figures of dead or dying. There is, further, the decorative symmetry of repeated but reversed shapes, varied with an admirable naturalism that secures variety in unity.

Throughout these developments in Ancient Greece beauty still remained a cult. The poets sang of their gods as having the form of beautiful mortals, the sculptors represented them so. That lower order of mythical creatures like Briareus and Cerberus, with their multiple heads and limbs, come into another category ; usually that of giants and beasts. Beauty was, as we have seen, a religious ideal, and that fact accounts for the sure progress of taste and expression in Hellas, since there were no abnormalities to corrupt a high standard and retard development as there were in Egypt, where the gods were seldom other than nightmarish anomalies.

The Greeks adored bodily beauty ; prayed to the gods for it ; devised systems of competitions and prizes to encourage it. The creation of a perfect standard or canon of beauty seems to have been an ever-present objective.

Polyclitus (fourth century B.C.) made the figure of a youth

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with a spear, the "Doryphorus." This, Pliny says, "was called 'the Canon' by artists, who drew from it the rudiments of Art as from a code." Lysippus, a century later, created another canon, "the head smaller and the body more slender and firmly knit," according to Pliny, who further says that Lysippus claimed to represent men as they ought to be, and not, as the older artists did, as they were. This would signify a further stage of idealism; that is to say, that Lysippus, adopting the realism of Praxiteles with regard to physiological factors, made a new generalisation with regard to anatomical measurements.

Without any relinquishment of breadth and idealising generality, Greek sculpture, as it hastened on to more perfect expression, displayed certain psychological characteristics in the humanity of its types. Statues of Venus exhibited a languorous seductiveness in the eyes, always without a marking of the pupil. The lids were a little closed in what the ancients themselves described as a "liquid" look. Later, occasion permitted emotion, chiefly that of a chastened grief, to be introduced in the faces of the nobler characters, and merriment in those of fauns and satyrs.

It is said that Greek painting influenced sculpture in some ways, particularly in the mode of representing drapery with innumerable folds. The painter working in a more rapid medium was probably able to obey the impressions of his eye in naturalistic aspects, and this fact is postulated as explaining the supremely true and beautiful fluttering of draperies in the "Victory" of Samothrace, one of the finest treasures that antiquity has bequeathed.

This statue, in its much admired position on the staircase of the Louvre, in Paris, presents a noble appearance as far as its general shape is concerned; but in my opinion the excellencies of the drapery and the modelling of the torso with its superb serpentine line are more in evidence in the cast at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. I have therefore given an illustration of the work, well-known in its profile aspect, of the Oxford cast, which the authorities kindly allowed me to have photographed by my skilful friend, Robert Chalmers, of Sunderland, who has secured the delicate and subtle modelling that the full

and fortunate illumination of the cast so well reveals. This lighting, it seems to me, is much more akin to that which the old Greeks themselves must have known, than is that of the Louvre, since the "Victory," according to a version upon a coin, was supposed to stand on the sculptured prow of a ship on a wall, in commemoration of a naval victory over the Egyptian general Ptolemy. Of this gorgeous example of realistic and ideal work, Prof. S. Reinach says in "Apollo": "The irresistible energy, the victorious swing of the body, the quivering life that seems to animate the marble, the happy contrast afforded by the flutter of the wind-swept mantle and the adherence of the closely-fitting tunic to the torso, combine to make the statue the most exquisite expression of movement left to us by antique art. The sculptor has not only translated muscular strength and triumphant grace into marble; he has also suggested the intensity of the sea-breeze."

Where positive realism is so beautiful why crave for idealism? Personally, I should feel the same kind of breathless elation before as beautiful a real living figure in wind-blown draperies as I do before the Samothrace "Victory," and I should say, "Here at last is something beyond the reach of genius."

Where the artist aims at representing anything at all in the cosmos he can only get his *full* response by convincing proofs of reality. He may indicate an idea without any such conviction; but that is not representative or imitative Art. In the finest realistic Art the real must call up the ideal, and therefore the artist has to augment the purely æsthetic appeal by securing realistic truths such as the modelling and display of the drapery above referred to, which has all the charms of design as well as the thrilling appeal to our experience of natural cause and effect. At its best, Hellenic sculpture exalts by lifting us into a world of wonder and beauty that we do not really know except in the vagueness of dreams and ecstasies. But sculpture that makes us ask whether it is beautiful because it is true to our concepts, or true because it is so rapturously beautiful—that is the sculpture of the Hellenistic periods at its apogee, before its gradual descent into the exaggerations of theatricality—it is the art of Praxiteles, of Scopas, of Lysippus.



THE "VICTORY" OF SAMOTHRACE.  
*Photographed, by permission, from a cast in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford,  
by Mr. Rev. Chubb, of Sunderland*





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We read the references of classic authors only with the lamentable reflection that the greatest works of immortal genius have all disappeared, and it is deplorable to think what the world has lost. Nothing remains but fragments of things, some of which the ancient critics regarded as second rate. That complete Baedeker, Pausanias, dismisses our greatest treasure, the Parthenon pediment sculptures, in thirty-two Greek words : words of cold and commonplace description at that. To the "Hermes" of Praxiteles he gives *nineteen* words ! Yet Pausanias was a prig for ready-made repute, having no opinions of his own. What must have been the effect of the lost works upon the real critics who have left their enthusiasms on record ? All we know of a few of them is what can be gleaned from copies—not replicas—copies and variations, made by unknown men and frequently in another medium. An outstanding instance of this is the case of the Cnidian "Aphrodite" sculptured by Praxiteles. This famous piece remains to us only in the form of two copies ; one in Rome and one in Munich. A cast of the Vatican copy was once on view at South Kensington. A copy of the head was found at Olympia, and a copy of the torso also exists. Perry says that the attitude of the goddess is no doubt correctly given on a coin of Cnidus struck in honour of the wife of Caracalla. Thus, admire these copies as we may, we cannot get at the true essence of the original, from which the copiers deliberately depart. A Roman copy might attempt a facsimile but a Greek one would not ; for the Greeks scorned servile repetition ; they preferred to play variations on a given theme. An enhancement of interest accrues to the Cnidian "Venus" as being the work of an artist who was also a lover ; for the statue is said to have been modelled from the adorable "hetaira," Phryne, to whom Praxiteles presented his equally famous "Eros." To what extent the people of Cnidus, who bought the "Aphrodite," valued it as a civic treasure may be learnt from Pliny's account given in Appendix III.

Roman art activity found its best expression in architectural engineering, and it would seem that the same temperamental practicality took root in the congenial soil of portrait sculpture. Individual character was sought for above all and secured

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without a trace of Greek idealism. This practical application of artistic taste resulted in a splendid output well sustained. Those who visit the British Museum are struck with the virility of the commemorative busts and funerary reliefs there displayed. As a small collection they typify the general excellence of Roman Art in this branch of work.

Apart from this department of the art, Sculpture passed through its dark ages in Italy. Imperial Rome under the Emperors degraded it. Caligula, it is said, desecrated Greek sculptures with his own likeness ; Nero painted them gaudily. Under Trajan Sculpture came to its own again, and Hadrian was a Greek enthusiast. After him there was another dark age until some lingering germs of Etruscan genius grew and made, together with Lombard vigour, a congenial soil from which sprang the builders of Christian churches and the sculptors of their nondescript ornaments. It was the Greek tradition in Etruscan workmanship, culminating in Niccola Pisano, that made the glory of the Pulpit of the Baptistery at Pisa. This work of art earned for Pisano the title of " Father of Modern Sculpture."

In the thirteenth century Christianity may be said to have occasioned, if it did not dominate, all art expression. Glass-painting and the illumination of manuscripts developed amain, and sculpture was freely used for the decoration of both romanesque and gothic churches. But whilst Byzantine traditions still survived in the one, the other broke away from lifeless formulæ and found inspiration in Nature. The capitals of columns were furnished with loving representations of plant life ; the statuettes were modelled upon life, with draperies as naturalistic and beautiful as though the Ancient Greeks had carved them. The posing of figures was no longer stiff and conventional, the expressions of the faces were instinct with human traits that won response from men of the world. The episodes depicted were not exclusively Biblical, nor was Art confined to the purposes of ceremonial. Tombs were adorned with effigies in which the armour and costume of the period were given with skill and a keen decorative sense.

A curious feature of these effigies, however, should be

noted. In spite of the naturalism exhibited in the carving of the faces, the general proportion, the detail of costume and armour, all so admirably copied as to give the appearance of a once live figure petrified, there is an utter absence of naturalism in the neglect of any realisation of weight and gravitation. The figures look indeed as though they had been made to stand upright and had been placed horizontally as an after-thought. It is not till centuries later that skirts drop upon legs to the avoidance of parallel folds in supine figures. More modern work secures immense advantage in a sense of repose and placidity by representing the falling of draperies from all points of support.

But for this egregious lapse, gothic Art was supremely naturalistic, and this accounts for its vigorous health and life. It found its way into Italy, where already the Italian Art that was heir to the Etruscan native realism embraced it eagerly. It is not right to assign the development of humanistic Art in Italy entirely to the Renaissance. That turning back to the literature of classic times did but steady the progress of realism by drawing attention to the remains of Greek and Roman sculptures that had lain half-buried in Italian soil for a thousand years. In the northern countries the benign influence was less powerfully felt, and so gothic naturalism developed into triviality in the ensuing centuries. In Italy, however, the classic ideal was a beautifying influence in the native leaning towards life and Nature as opposed to the Byzantine conventions; and gothic realism vivified the dormant genius that lay under the pall of Byzantine tradition. It awoke with Niccola Pisano, who was born at Pisa in the beginning of the thirteenth century. Whilst following classic models he infused his figures in the panels around his pulpit with the fresh and living truth of the gothic sculptors—those *imagiers* who worked for the cathedral artists in France—and his pulpit is a landmark in art history.

The next outstanding achievements were the two great doors of bronze of the Baptistery at Florence, of which mention has been made. They were decorated by reliefs which Michelangelo said were worthy of the gates of Paradise. The artist who modelled them was Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378-1465). An

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electro copy of one is at South Kensington Museum. In them the technicalities of perspective are mastered in a way seldom since surpassed in sculpture. Grouping, action, and composition are combined into impressive and adequately decorative design. Side by side with these epoch-making works, Donatello (1386-1466) was developing sculpture in the round and in low relief, the humanism of which has made him famous for ever. He treated childhood with a sensitiveness and beauty unknown since classic times, yet with an individual intimacy which Greek idealism avoided. His figures show personal traits. Lithe and alert, they express the beauty of life. The influence of Donatello is strong to-day.

Peculiar to Florentine sculpture was the modelling of clay plaques, which by reason of their low cost were eagerly acquired by the people. Until 1530 the chief artists in this ware were the family of Della Robbia, of whom Luca is perhaps the most famous for his glazed wall-reliefs in white and blue, which to this day adorn many an Italian wall, where they delight the peasant, as they did in the sixteenth century, no less than the connoisseur. And the reason for this is that the combination of idealistic and realistic motives which resulted in the irresistible allurements of Greek sculpture is felt also in the greatest work of the Italian Renaissance, although the outcome of both are so widely different. Florentine sculpture, like the Roman, put more value upon concrete character than upon abstract beauty. It was accordingly strong in portraiture. Moreover, the asceticism of religious observance curbed the humanistic spirit that in Venice, for example, carried Art swiftly along on the wings of materialistic beauty. The Florentine spirit was restrained, decorous, and aspiring: it purged the classical ideal of its voluptuousness and endowed it with sanctity and the gentle beauty of homely truth. Donatello, the family of the Della Robbias, and Sansovino, enshrined classic ideality in the gothic realism of pulsating life, and thus their appeal went straight to the hearts of the people.

Can we say as much of the sublime creations of Michelangelo Buonarroti? Were not his ideals too lofty and remote for all but the innately poetic and the real cognoscenti? He was born nine years after the death of Donatello and lived to his eighty-

ninth year, a contemporary of the Della Robbias ; but how far removed is their appeal from his ! Michelangelo was never a happy man. Like Rembrandt's, his old age was solitary. Always loaded with more commissions than he could complete, his work was often unfinished, and he became latterly indifferent on that point when once he had approached a tentative realisation of his ideas. His " Slaves " for the tomb of Pope Julius II. were " impressions " compared with the delicately finished work of the Florentines : one of them is little more than " blocked out." But even in the finished triumphs : the " Moses," the " David," the " Day and Night," the " Evening and Dawn," there is something that had never been seen before in sculpture. Each is possessed of that quality artists call a " bigness " of style which can readily be likened to the manner of Myron and Phidias. The works are big in scale as well as big in treatment, and so far they are descendants direct of the great classic tradition. But the bigness of the Attic sculpture was calm, reposeful, even gentle. Not so the figures of Michelangelo, though he truly worshipped the antique and studied it throughout his long life. He was the poet of struggle and anguish. Even the wondrous women forms which typify Night and Evening are sad with the weight of life. They are not Venus and Minerva or Diana. They are scarcely beautiful in that sense. Their ideality is that of all patient suffering : a generalisation of all fateful endurance. This it is that makes Michelangelo greater than Phidias as we know him, though how we should estimate Phidias if we knew him by his greatest works cannot be said. We do not know the Olympian life of the great gods : we know too well the worldly life in which men strive, and it is in the language of that strife that Michelangelo speaks.

He inspired many who were unable to rise to his heights ; but one, the egregious Benvenuto Cellini, of whom we have had occasion to speak, came near to sublimity in his " Perseus " holding aloft the Gorgon's head. This work combines very obviously Cellini's efforts towards the grandeur of Michelangelo and the sweet strength of Donatello.

Italian influences were strong in France when from 1309 onwards the Popes kept court at Avignon ; but the healthy

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Flemish Art held its own there both in sculpture and in painting. French Art was therefore nursed by two foster-mothers and should have produced works with the qualities of each. In sculpture its best representative was Jean Goujon, whose date is the latter half of the sixteenth century. His reliefs are charming in their boldness of design and refinement of modelling; particularly the delightful "Nymphs" of the Fontaine des Innocents in Paris.

Sculpture was honoured under the artistic ambitions of Louis XIV. who filled the gardens of Versailles with copies of antiques and new works by eminent members of Le Brun's staff, Coysevox, Girardon and others. Even to-day—the day of the char-à-banc tourist and the untidy picnic person, Versailles impresses us with a sense of the loftily beautiful, artificial though it may seem in these times. And the quiet and sad regretful joy of those gardens is due to the statuary that commands their basins and lurks in their *bosquets*. To test the truth of this, imagine the gardens without it.

### MODERN SCULPTURE

Modern sculpture has found many exponents in Italy, the most famous of whom was Canova (1757–1822), a man who has been unfairly treated by critics. Few sculptors in recent centuries have studied more successfully the art of fine and graceful design. His "Cupid and Psyche" is unexceptionable in this respect. In France the eighteenth century produced Houdon, a portraitist of great power: witness his "Voltaire" in the Paris Opera House. Barye, the incomparable master of animal life, belongs to the nineteenth century. Later came Rodin, a genius and a humorist, the worst of whose jokes have been "dumped" in the South Kensington Museum. Denmark claims Thorwaldsen, a man of reputation in his own day.

But the nearest approach to the sublimity of Michelangelo was reached by our own Alfred Stevens (1817–1875)—a genius who was the sport of interested officialism. For many years his Wellington Memorial was incompletely erected. It was his life's great work and he received an honorarium of £100 for it. The "Prophets" in the spandrels under the dome of St. Paul's are his. In the recently demolished Dorchester



TRUTH PULLING OUT THE TONGUE OF FALSEHOOD  
STEVENS

*(On the Washington Memorial)*

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House his sculptures were hidden from the public eye ; but his memory is at last receiving the dues of fame that he himself never enjoyed. Original, profound, and beautiful in its faultlessness of modelling, his statuary dominates that of all nations since the days of Michelangelo, with whose sublime creations it has much in common.

Appreciation of sculpture is largely now a lost faculty. The images we put in our city grass plats and open places are realistic effigies of departed civilians who have "done the state some service." The statue of fancy and poetry that should preside in a garden to attune the mind to restful, remote, and beautiful things is far to seek. We try to be content with coats and trousers in bronze and marble. Public commissions go for little else. But the realism—the literalism—of these things turns the mind into flippant channels. We wonder when the images jump down and go to bed. Sometimes the feeling is even stronger. I always think when I pass the memorial to Nurse Cavell that someone ought to bring a ladder and hand the poor lady down to lunch. One cannot help such levity. The fault is with the mistaken idea that sculpture should be petrification of people we jostle with in life. Alas ! when an effort is made towards allegory it comes not from a public body, but from a public "company," who are best pleased with something that will set everybody talking. It was recently reported in a newspaper that a certain journalist, addressing a meeting of tradesmen, told them that they should have their buildings decorated with statues by — as that kind of thing was the best possible advertisement. The sort of statuary that is a commercial advertisement because it is sensational requires no description. One piece of modern work, and one only, has won its way to the hearts of the people, and that is Frampton's "Peter Pan." But there is not likely to be another because sculpture to-day is all to a slight extent tarred with the brush of that modernism which is efficient as commercial advertisement and thus opposed diametrically to the spirit of traditional beauty and to the great masters of all epochs : the spirit whose last gasps were felt in Thornycroft, Onslow Ford, Brock, Drury, Colton, Wood, Frampton and a few of their compeers.

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Almost all that the archæologist is able to learn of past civilisations is due to the relics of the minor arts of the people. Those of the remotest antiquity have become part of the soil, but where the length of time is less they can more easily be discovered near the surface. Later eras supply examples that have been preserved in collections made at the times when men began to be conscious of the value in records of a venerable and beautiful past.

The minor arts comprise those activities which produced the luxurious necessities of life: coins, domestic utensils, ornaments of personal adornment, toys, arms and armour. In Eastern Europe the most numerous and most artistic finds have been those of pottery and coinage. These between them have proved incredibly valuable sources of knowledge in every department of historical research; and in particular the Greek vases have supplied inexhaustible information on all details of Greek life and customs. They even throw considerable light upon conjectural and contentious points of Homeric study. For example, we get from the vases, and from them alone, the picture of the Trojan helmet, the nodding crest of which frightened the baby boy of Hector. Vases are the only authentic illustrations to Homer, since their most aged examples are contemporary with the unwritten circulation of the great epics. They were at first almost exclusively discovered in Etruscan tombs, and from that cause were known as "Etruscan Vases."

## VASE PAINTINGS

The earliest vase found dates from the eighteenth or twentieth century B.C., and the latest specimens, very decadent, ceased to be made in the first century B.C.

Those of the finest period have always evoked panegyrics from connoisseurs on account of the mastery of design and brush work they exhibit. In speaking of a particular "cylix" (a saucer with two handles on a stem or foot) in the National Collection, Professor Middleton, as quoted in Seyffert's Classical Dictionary, says, "for delicacy of touch and refined

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beauty of drawing this painting is quite unrivalled. The exquisite loveliness of Aphrodite's head and the pure grace of her profile show a combination of mechanical skill united to imaginative power and realisation of the most perfect and ideal beauty." That is the kind of criticism that warms one's heart. It is better than pages of "information" and relieves me from saying more. There is ample literature upon the fictile arts of Greece.

A brief description of the important divisions of style cannot be avoided.

The historical sequence commences with decoration in the form of bands of ornament and animals in profile. They are painted freely, with a pointed brush, in various colours upon the light buff ground of the vessel. During the sixth century B.C. black figures were painted on a red ground. Archaic as this work is at first, in style it is wonderful from the point of view of freedom in technical skill, for it shows no "bungling"; every line is clean and direct. Whether or not the "wasters" were destroyed is hard to determine; but there is no reason to believe that the sherds and fragments discovered are anything but "rank and file" pieces broken by accident. Vases of the best period emanated from Athens in vast quantities. During the next century they are seen to follow another plan of red figures "left" on the clay by being surrounded with the black varnish upon the red ground. It is in this style that vase-painting reached its finest achievements in design and workmanship.

The remarkable circumstance in this art activity is that although Athens uttered many thousands of vases of many different shapes and kinds, there is never one that is a copy of another. Tracings and patterns were never used. Every one is an original, and unique. They were exported in great numbers to all parts of the civilised world, and even to-day they exist in many thousands.

### DOMESTIC OBJECTS

Somewhat akin to pottery is the terra-cotta work which seemed to serve the Greeks of all times as a homely substitute for bronze and marble. Easy to model and easy to bake, this

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ready material was used for reliefs, tombstones (*stele*) and for votive offerings to the gods. A large collection of figurines were unearthed at Tanagra in Bæotia, and from this circumstance the name has become a generic one for all specimens of clay figures of this class. They depict with much charm and intimacy the costume and domesticity of Greek life; actors, caricatures, animals and other creatures made as house ornaments or as toys. There are likewise images of gods, goddesses, heroes, and also copies of famous statues.

The more general examples of artistic effort brought to light by excavations at Tiryns, Troy, Mycenæ, Cnossus, and Ur, though of absorbing interest, are still in the domain of archæology, and studies on these lines are to be pursued elsewhere. It might be noted, however, that the art which flourished at Cnossus, in Crete, from 2,000 to 3,000 years B.C. has some amazing resemblances to our own of the present time. There have been found little figures of women in costume that might serve for the evening dress of an English lady of Victorian times; one shows a long skirt with flounces from the waist downwards, worn over a corset, and cut in the approved *décolleté* style. Conquest seems to have terminated the marvellous beginnings of plastic and graphic art of the reign of King Minos in Crete.

Both in Greece and Rome Art entered into the making of objects of use far more generally than it does in modern days. Every considerable museum can show its utensils, its lamps, candelabra, tripods, mirrors and the handles of various objects beautifully shaped in bronze, and often in silver and gold. Bronze was, for these purposes, sometimes cast, but more often beaten-up from the back (*repoussé*) and mounted or joined. It was also customary to fashion objects of exceedingly thin bronze, too frail for use, to place in tombs as appurtenances of the dead. They are often of admirable design.

Bronze gave way to the more precious metals with the progress of time, although there are silver and gold cups and dishes of immense antiquity which have escaped destruction either by burial in tombs or preservation in private collections. The latter go by the name of "Treasures." In some cases they have been found undisturbed and undispersed. Perhaps the

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most ancient and remarkable of the golden cups are two that were discovered in a tomb at Vaphio in Sparta. They bear an intricate and beautiful design of leaping bulls and floral ornament.

Of the innumerable examples of goldsmithery and silver work of Renaissance times which abound in the chief collections of Europe it is not possible here to do more than make the bare mention.

### IVORIES

Ivory was used by the Egyptians and Assyrians for small reliefs, and, as we have seen, by the Greeks for their colossal statues. The best efforts of Byzantine Art appeared in this material in the form of reliefs, sculpture in the round being debarred by religious prejudice. But the most delightful ivories are the gothic, replete with healthy realism and the fascination of naturalism. Professor S. Reinach\* draws attention to the peculiar pose of the numerous examples of the Virgin and Child, which conforms to the action of supporting the Babe's weight by advancing one hip. This is a most remarkable instance of the resources of true talent as well of the control of Form by material ; for the resulting curved line of the figure adapts itself economically to the shape of the tusk.

### COINS AND MEDALS

Coins are, in a sense, original works of art, which is more than can be said for almost all our classic treasures in bronze and marble, which are, with exceptions, copies of something better that has disappeared. But beyond that, coins preserve to us the form and semblance of those supreme works of antiquity in bronze and marble which were once the pride of cities. Numerous pieces of statuary of which no other record remains but the references made to them by classic writers are identified beyond doubt upon the coins which are the illustrations to Greek history. The British Museum Catalogue contains this justifiable boast : " For the study of Mythology these coins present the local conceptions of the gods and

\* " Apollo," p. 127.

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heroes worshipped in the Greek world, with their attributes and symbols. The historian will find a gallery of characteristic portraits of sovereigns, almost complete, from Alexander the Great to Augustus. The geographical student will be able to verify and correct the nomenclature of the classical writers as preserved to us in manuscripts. The metrologist can gain an insight into the various systems of ancient metrology in its different standards, and obtain a just view of the relative values of the precious metals and the great lines of trade in the Greek and Roman world," etc., etc.

The earliest known coin dates from about 700 B.C. It is of electrum, a natural amalgam of gold and silver, and was struck in Lydia. It is claimed that in the earlier half of the third century B.C. numismatic art reached the highest point it has ever attained. The devices of the coins are characterised by intensity of action, pathos, charm of bearing, finish of execution, and rich ornamentation. After this apogee, which puts our utilitarian twentieth century methods to shame, coinage began to decline. The rule of Alexander occasioned cessation of issue by autonomous states. Roman conquests brought extension of the denarii to the exclusion of all else.

But the Romans invented the medal to commemorate events. The medal was a large and carefully executed piece which ceased to appear after the fall of the Western Empire. It revived in Italy with the Renaissance, where the most prominent name in the Art during the fifteenth century was that of Vittore Pisanello.

In France the medal flourished in the epochs of the Renaissance, of Louis XIV., and of Napoleon. The earlier period produced the larger "plaque," which has its subject on one side only.

Germany's medals owe their reputation to Dürer, who designed the best. The Dutch exhibited many of the qualities of the paintings of that country. In England we seldom thought ourselves competent to design and strike medals, so with an exception or two we employed Italians and a Dutchman to do them for us. One of the most successful artistically is the Waterloo medal designed by Pistrucci, whose George and Dragon is well known on our sovereign pieces.

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### ENGRAVED GEMS AND GLASS WARE.

The cutting of gems in precious stones was an Oriental art, and the Greeks learnt it by way of Egypt. Originally and usually the designs were cut *intaglio*; that is in concave and negative, and were mounted in finger-rings to be used as seals. With Alexander the cutting of cameos came into fashion. Sometimes whole stones were used to be carved out as vases, their layers affording cameo decorations.

Such works were highly prized by collectors: a fact which has preserved the antique gem more successfully than is the case with other treasures. Accumulations of beautiful gems that have been handed down from the first century B.C. are still the basis of celebrated collections.

Of glass ware there is a history dating from the Egyptians. The Venetians exercised the most surprising ingenuity in embedding threads and lace-work into the body of the "metal." In such examples as the famous and ill-fated Portland Vase, a layer of opaque white glass covered the coloured ground of the vessel and was then cut away, leaving the figures of the design in relief as in a cameo. Germany and Flanders both produced works of art in glass.

### PAINTING

The representation upon a flat surface of things seen in Nature is accomplished in many ways, all of which may be conveniently grouped as graphic art (*grapho* = I write) as opposed to representations in the round which are grouped as plastic (*plasso* = I daub over). By far the most generally adopted of all the graphic methods is that of painting, having regard to its several varieties.

In view of what has been advanced as to an instinctive readiness in the apprehension of a cubic image, this greater popularity of painting might seem contradictory. But painting has not the hoary antiquity of sculpture, the earliest traditions of which are involved in myth and legend. The first records of painting (the quarternary cave paintings excepted) are associated with the names of actual individuals. A drawing or picture implies thought of a kind more advanced than



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mere recognition: it involves interpretation on the spectator's part; and that fact it is which constitutes the attractiveness of pictures for civilised people.

Any graphic effort on a plane surface, even if that surface be bent, extends only in the direction of height and width, and demands a system of representation founded upon assumptions and conventions. These assumptions are for the most part licensed by the recollections of actual vision; but they proved stumbling blocks in the early days of civilised life. It was rather a triumph when the cave-man scratched upon his ivories a picture of an animal with one leg crossed over another. There was, in that, something more than the inevitable profile outline. All primitive representation is outline, or silhouette. That is to say, the artist does not attempt anything more than his strongest concept of an object. The strongest concept is of its greatest aspect—the animal passing-by view. It is the most recurrent view, and leaves the deepest impression. Man did not wait to observe when being charged by wild animals: he had more important matters to think of. And when an animal was retiring it presented a view that quickly grew less distinct and was, further, less characteristically outlined than the profile or passing-by view.

The Altamira cave-men drew and painted animal life exclusively. After the art-hiatus, when primitive man recommenced to draw, a long period elapsed before he drew men. It was by an entirely different motive that he ultimately did so; and when he did, he still outlined the forms in profile. In cubic images he put eyes and sometimes hands and indications of clothing on his carvings; and they were of so flat a character that it was easy to transfer such inner markings to drawing on the flat. But in such drawings nothing could be represented that was any distance in front of the body.

As we have seen, all early reliefs and pictures of Assyrian and Egyptian origin had their different objects isolated round about, and all in the one and only plane; never was one thing allowed to cross over before another. In studying old work it is amazing to us that the idea of depth—the third dimension—was so long developing in Art. When at last it did, the difficulties of perspective awakened in overwhelming numbers,

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and they gave to pictures a ridiculous quaintness and night-marish look of impossibility which now our "advanced" artists deliberately copy. I don't know why; but I think I can guess.

But this trouble of interpretation and adaptation was not limited to perspective. The problems of colour and light had likewise to be solved and they are still being wrestled with. In the meantime the practice of pictorial representation of a three-dimensional world by a two-dimensional method has established thousands of conventions which custom and use have made such amenable currency between artist and spectator that they are no longer recognised as conventions. Nevertheless, effects of distance, of retreating planes, of light and shade, of colour, of texture, of mist, of irradiation, of motion, etcetera and still etcetera, cannot be *presented* in the way of a working model: they must be *represented*, and this two-dimensional restriction is the very glory of representative Art.

Alas for that glory, however. Our writers on Art, in cabal, have decreed that it shall be dimmed. Representative Art is anathema to the professional pundit. It is supposed to toy with Illusion, and you cannot find a bigger bugbear than Illusion in modern lucubrations on painting. The assumption is perhaps that a spectator in the Royal Academy will be after lifting his hat to the ladies' portraits, or trying to get through the canvas of a landscape because he hears a lark. If this is childish, it is a perfectly legitimate *reductio ad absurdum*. Surely the two-dimensional character of painting is at once safeguard and justification in regard to the expediency of making things look like what they are supposed to be. In the plastic arts where the only risk obtains, scale and the absence of colour can be safeguards. Although sculpture has been, in modern times, coloured, its æsthetic success has been doubtful, and it may be confidently supposed that no artist ever wished his statues to be mistaken for living persons. That would be positive illusion, and it is not the proper aim of Fine Art of any kind to deceive, or to tickle people into thinking that they might perhaps be deceived if it were not for their sharpness of observation. All such tricks of illusion are quite in place with

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waxwork images. Waxworks are often artistic, but they are not Fine Art.

It is obvious that any presentment of the third dimension, namely, depth, must necessarily come about by implication only. The spectator cannot actually put his hand behind represented objects in a picture as he can with objects modelled "in the round." Nevertheless he sees clearly the painter's intention that one thing in a picture stands before another. This is not illusion. He does not mistake pictured trees and distant hills for real trees and distant hills ; but the added charm of depth appeals to his sense of the infinite.

The implication of depth involves another difference between flat and round representations. It is that the view-point—the point at which the spectator is supposed to be standing to view the scene of a picture—is always at the same spot, no matter where he may actually stand : the spot, in fact, from which the painter saw or imagined he saw the scene when he painted it. The spectator can see no more and no less of the pictured objects by shifting his standpoint ; yet this is exactly what he could do before a piece of sculpture. He can even take a small modelled figure in his hand and turn it about. These circumstances are a further barrier to any actual illusion in painting.

Sculpture is, in this respect at least, the more illusory, since it approaches nearer to the form of the waxwork. For while there is no advantage in looking at the back of a canvas, there is every advantage in walking all round a statue to see it. The conviction of solidity that this necessarily confirms renders works in three dimensions less fruitful of suggestion to the average person than works in two dimensions. The very concreteness of sculpture—its air-displacement—is a bar to imagination and fancy. But against this we must place the advantage it can claim in presenting not one phase of its charm but an infinite number.

The episode a painting depicts is sure of telling its tale unhampered wherever and whenever it is seen. Its point of view is constant ; its colour is, for practical purposes, always the same ; its light and shade cannot vary. Moreover, it may deal with phenomena that are impossible of representation in

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sculpture : far-reaching distance, mist, smoke, effulgence, and others.

There is an airy magic in a fine picture that can carry the spectator away from the place and moment of his inspection. This transport is due to the fact that such a picture is not the real thing, but an interpretation. It is a story told of something, not a concrete image of it as sculpture is. The mind here does not receive a record passively, but explores a suggestion actively. At a proper viewpoint the spectator "reads into" the work all that he knows and feels and desires, and it is on this co-operation that the painter counts. By virtue of it, looseness of handling and avoidance of exhaustive delineation is not only often justified but at times demanded. For colour cannot be "local" as it is in painted images, because the picture must give the local colour as it will appear to be modified by lighting and reflections such as the design imposes. Tone is, once for all, offered in accordance with conditional requirements, and does not change as tone does upon a solid object with every variation in lighting. We see a piece of sculpture by the light that falls upon it at the moment, and as it is affected by its surroundings ; but such conditions of lighting and environment are not in all cases exactly what the sculptor schemed for and they may misrepresent his intentions. The picture is free from such risks.

Painting is a process as simple to-day as it was in the days of antiquity, with as few complexities and as little apparatus. There are no activities of any sort either in the arts or in the crafts which retain their primitiveness to the same extent. The carving of marble has now become a far more technical art involving the use of instruments for "pointing," by which a mason can copy in stone a model formed in clay by the artist. Michelangelo attacked blocks of marble, free hand, so to speak, with chisel and mallet, arriving at ultimate finish by more and more careful chipping. Painting has never been anything else than the application of pigment carried to a surface in a medium or vehicle by the brush. The Egyptians used water-colours upon a smooth surface of lime or gypsum. Similar methods were in use with the Early Greeks.

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### FRESCO

It is erroneous to suppose that *al fresco* is a term which applies only to wall-painting executed out-of-doors. The "freshness" applies exclusively to the plaster or "stucco" on which the picture appears, more often indoors than out.

Stucco is must be noted is but a superior kind of plaster, finer both in material—lime and sand—and in preparation. There are two methods of Fresco painting, respectively named *Buon Fresco* and *Fresco Secco*. The latter is a misnomer. It is only the *buon* variety that is really "fresh," because the plaster has to be painted upon as soon as it is applied. If it dries it is useless for the purpose. This entails a removal of all the surface that cannot be covered in one day's work, and replacement of new plaster on the next attack. The joins thus necessitated are planned to occur at the outlines or contours of spaces of different colour or tone where they are not noticed. This is the method Michelangelo had to adopt in the Sistine Chapel ceiling subjects. The pigments are used with a vehicle of lime water in both methods ; but in the alternative, *Fresco Secco*, the plaster for the whole picture is prepared and allowed to dry. The pigment can then be applied without hurry or embarrassment to the artist after the wall has been re-moistened. It seems the better plan ; but its results lack all the brilliancy and permanence that *Buon Fresco* secures.

Some idea of Roman painting is gathered from the frescoes unearthed at Pompeii. Here and there they show signs of a lightness of touch and a treatment of colour independent of forms and outlines which seem to anticipate modern methods.

Whatever charms fresco painting has, or may have had, of brilliance, lightness, flat or "matt" surface (as opposed to shiny), such charms are doomed to disappear ; less because the colours do not last than because the "ground" or support upon which they are painted crumbles before the onslaughts of Time. Comparatively few frescoes remain in a fit condition to speak of their pristine appearance, and most have been restored and retouched by later painters. The case of the "Last Supper," by Leonardo da Vinci, is the most distressing. It commenced to fade and disintegrate soon after it was finished, and in fifty years was "finished with." It has been

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restored many times, but its original state is most authoritatively reflected in a copy made in its early days by Marco d'Oggionno. It is said that Leonardo, in the experimental spirit that animated his inventive genius, attempted some employment of oil in this work, with the dire results that posterity has never ceased to deplore.

Fresco painting has been attempted in England but without success. The atmosphere of London proved ruinous to the decorations carried out in this medium in the House of Commons. Nor does the Gambier Parry "Spirit Fresco" process, adopted by Sir Frederick Leighton for the lunettes in South Kensington Museum, seem to have been much more fortunate, since they have been repaired recently by other hands.

### ENCAUSTIC PAINTING

The Romans introduced a process which gave more brilliance and immunity from damp than did Fresco. This was "Encaustic Painting," thus described by Vitruvius: "The medium used was melted white wax mixed with oil to make it more fluid." (This disposes of the Van Eyck legend.) "The pot containing the wax was kept over a brazier while the painter was at work, in order to keep the molten wax from solidifying. The stucco on the wall was also prepared with a coating of wax applied with a brush, and polished by being rubbed over with a wax candle and finally with a linen cloth. When the picture had been painted the waxen colours were fixed by being melted into the stucco by heat from a charcoal brazier held closely and moved over the whole surface." Encaustic painting was principally the process used in Early Christian times; but it was not unknown to the Greeks, and the paintings of Nicias (320 B.C.) are thought to have been entirely in this medium.

### DISTEMPER

The method used for whitewashing and "colouring" our outhouses is as venerable as Fresco. It is Distemper Painting, and is favoured by the scene painter as being rapid, cheap, and brilliant. There have been many painters of eminence that have delighted in its amenities. Inigo Jones (1572-1652), De

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Loutherburg (1740-1812), Girtin (1773-1802), and Clarkson Stanfield (1793-1867) painted theatrical scenery, largely as an indulgence in a pleasant hobby, it would appear, since none of them were scene painters by specific profession; and the names of those who stood highest in the art before its *débâcle* by modernism and the Russian Ballet are still revered.

We learn that about the middle of the fifth century B.C. the Greek painter Agatharcus produced scenery for the plays of Æschylus. It is to be presumed that some variety of distemper medium was used for scenery which, like our own, was painted on canvas supported on wood framing; and canvas, of course, would never carry plaster for fresco. Scene painting, according to John William Donaldson,\* became a distinct and highly-cultivated branch of Art in the golden days of Greek Drama, and possibly it has been executed in distemper throughout the ages.

Classical authorities do not all make distinction between distemper and tempera. The essential difference between them—in the opinion of painters, at least—is that distemper is a “body-colour” method and tempera a transparent method, though it may be applied *impasto* (as a paste). In distemper the colours are mixed with levigated chalk (“whiting”) and the vehicle is size. It is used in a warm condition and dries lighter than it appears when wet, and with a flat broad effect.

### TEMPERA

The word “tempera,” being derived from the Italian *dis-temperare* = to dissolve, might be thought to mean the same thing as distemper. But tempera is a far more resourceful medium, and as venerable, in turn, as those already described. When it was discovered is not easily determined; but it served, and served faithfully, all the early painters of the Renaissance, up to the time of Botticelli (1446-1510) exclusively, and much later partially. In a picture gallery it is quite impossible for the uninitiated to tell the difference between tempera and oil paintings. The former have usually been varnished, and this gives to them the force and richness of the oil method.

\* “The Theatre of the Greeks” (Longmans, 1860).

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The two unfinished panels by Michelangelo in the National Gallery, "The Entombment of the Christ" and the "Madonna and Infant Christ," are declared to be in tempera, and would probably have been finished in oil in the customary manner of the artist's time. Practically all the glowing panels of early date are tempera paintings.

Tempera is, strange to say, a medial process between oil and water colour. The vehicle is yolk of egg. Sometimes the white (albumen) of the egg has been added, but that is not the essential ingredient. Oil of egg exists in the yolk alone. The original process seems to have been to mix the colours with water and then add the egg-oil, making the concoction miscible by some slightly acid vegetable juice. The vehicle is now supplied ready prepared. A fourteenth century artist, Cennino Cennini, wrote a treatise upon the method, the recent circulation of which in an English translation has resulted in restoring egg-painting to the notice of artists, who are now beginning to exploit its advantages. And they are many, for the medial position it takes between transparent and impasto application renders it equally effective upon paper, where it assumes the qualities of water colour, or upon canvas or panel, where it can attain to the strength of oil painting : and the characteristic resources of both mediums are, within reason, available. Moreover, it can be used for a first or under-painting and then have a finishing of oil colour over it ; whilst used as water colour it can be added to a water-colour drawing in the manner of body colour.

The "ground" for tempera painting in the past has consistently been "gesso," which is plaster of Paris in parchment size. To-day the ordinary grounds on canvas or panel supplied by artists' colourmen are usually made to answer the purpose with a priming of Tempera Foundation White.

### OIL PAINTING

After all, most of the works now in existence are oil paintings. But we may also say with perfect truth that most of the works that have nearly *passed out of existence* into the obscurity of faded colour and deepened tone are likewise oil paintings. The farther we go back historically the better seem to be the



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methods and the materials employed ; for the less have paintings deteriorated. To look at the Early Flemish pictures in the National Gallery is only to confess that we have lost the art.

We must not attach any importance to the story that oil painting was "invented" by the Van Eycks. This kind of thing is not invented. Oil has always been used more or less, in one way or another. Such a universal and plenteous commodity could not possibly escape the enterprising spirits of old who were forever trying to learn. What painters sought for was a vehicle for their colours that would enable them to gradate tints and tones with ease and rapidity. As they came to *see* better they wished to *paint* better. The flat tints of earlier days became a restriction. Flat tints do not exist in Nature, in spite of early frescoes, modern posters, and "decorative" faddists. This fact, men of the calibre of the Van Eycks knew better than we know, and they aimed at gradation.

Oil had the property of holding pigment with a smooth evenness of application which permitted every manipulation of attenuated and gradated tones. It made modifications and transitions of hue a delight instead of a difficulty. The only drawback to the use of raw oil was its retarded drying. It remains slippery, thin, and without the consistency that makes painting conformable to efficient practice. Tempera was no more amenable, for gradation is laborious in that medium. What the brothers Van Eyck probably did was to treat oil with some material which brought it to the condition of a jelly, easily spread without a tendency to run, and, above all, quickly hardening throughout. That they achieved something of this nature is evident by the jealous solicitude with which they kept their secret. Readers of Charles Reade's story, "The Cloister and the Hearth," will remember the precious information imparted to the hero by the sister of the Van Eycks regarding the purifying and bleaching of oil by water and sunlight. The passage suggests trustworthy research.

Since the day of the Van Eycks, painting in oil has been paramount. It travelled from Bruges, where it was reared, to Venice, where it matured to grandeur. But if we consider it from the point of view of workmanship rather than that of

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pictorial expression, we must count its great stages by its three incomparable typical exemplars : Van Eyck, Titian, and Rubens.

When an artist has truly mastered his technical execution he thinks nothing of his medium. It is no more present to his consciousness than is a pen to an inspired poet. He simply writes his messages with it. This Rubens did. In his works you see no sign of care or of effort. His brush strokes are simply the reflex of thought. His colour is a flood of exuberant vitality. One conviction dominates the spectator—that of rapidity and directness. Rubens painted as a skilled orator speaks when inspired ; without pause, without correction ; every thought in proper sequence and eloquently clothed. He drew and modelled and shaded with simple swathes of the brush—and was satisfied.

We may think of Velasquez and Hals too, and admit their triumphant directness ; but with them is the thought of how dexterously they have performed. With Rubens one does not think of performance—of something that might easily have gone wrong but did not because of the skilful hand. Painting was not performance with Rubens : it was ingenuous expression.

Tintoretto was greater as an artist than as a painter. His touch is often “ropy,” and his execution sometimes lacks homogeneity. Rembrandt, one sees, had a solicitous brush, and his canvases show resourcefulness rather than directness. Sir Joshua Reynolds was a stylist first and a painter next. In his emulation of the old masters he abused, rather than used, bitumen. This is a substance by which he doubtless attained the glowing gloom of shady backgrounds that he sought ; but bitumen melts at a low temperature and in time runs and takes everything with it. Sir Joshua’s pictures are now too often “magnificent ruins.” Turner, no less, was impatient or ignorant of the technics of his art, and sacrificed everything to the instantaneous demands of his genius. By mixing antagonistic elements and unamenable processes he robbed posterity and his own reputation each of its due.

Of late years chemists have given attention to the matter of durability of grounds, colours, and vehicles. Their researches

sum up to an indictment of rank commercialism on the part of artists' colourmen of earlier years who were content to supply what artists in chemical ignorance asked for, or were delighted to receive. Brilliant pigments, quick-drying vehicles and varnishes, and an utter ignorance of the nature of such things on the part of painters, led to the manufacture of materials to sell rather than to last. To-day, all this has changed, happily. Manufacturers supply chemical formulæ on their pigments and are prepared to give guarantees as to their grounds. The demand for speciously attractive commodities has dwindled and they are dropping out of the market. We may therefore hope that the day of ruined pictures is past, as far as materials are concerned.

But durability is quite as much dependent on method as upon materials. If a painting is done directly and without over-painting it dries well and free from those distressing *embus*, or dull patches, which repeated painting brings about. From personal and practical experience I can testify that modern oil paintings can last and lose nothing of brilliancy in forty years. The reason why many oil paintings deteriorate in these days is that they are subjected to methods of work which are bad for them. The chief of these is continuous over-painting, which results in degradation of colour and loss of homogeneity. If an artist has to alter and retouch he should do the whole thing again on a second canvas when he has finally satisfied himself; and he should do it from first to last in one effort in a slow-drying medium that will remain workable until the whole is complete. He should then burn his first attempt. His second will probably stand without change. But such advice will seem futile to the average painter of to-day, because the fashion is now to paint roughly. The smoothness of Van Eyck is smiled at as something pitifully comic. Some painters begin by loading palette-scrapings on to a canvas to give them "something to work on." I know one whose constant remark is, "There's not enough paint on it"—and he proceeds to load on more. What quality his plan secures I can never see. To my eyes there is always more quality to be got by "scraping down" and thus getting rid of superfluous pigment. A rough picture with gouts of paint sticking out from

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its surface has physical disadvantages in excess of any that can be charged to smooth painting. In the first place it is a thoroughly efficient dust trap; and the dust gets everywhere, into the tiniest and largest recesses from which nothing can dislodge it. A roughly overpainted picture is almost impossible to clean.

Thick painting is supposed to be masculine, I fancy. Everything in these days that is without restraint and decorum is supposed in some way to be fine. One painter of note has gone so far as to stick bits of glass and other alien substances into the pigment. But the most coarse and clumsy work is frequently the choice of ladies, who presumably thus try to secure masculinity. Van Eyck showed more, I think, by being free from this confession of weakness. The more smoothly and simply paint is laid the better it will last; and it will not require varnishing. A picture upon which paint has been dabbed and piled up at intervals has a dryness of appearance and a greyness due to diffusion of light from the myriad angles of its surface. The dry, "matt" appearance is partly caused by this and partly by the sinking of the oil into the lower layers of pigment. But if the matt appearance is valued, there are many better ways of arriving at it. Varnish "brings up" colours that have "sunk" and become dark and neutral. Varnish itself grows dull, horny, brown, and opaque, and has to be removed if the picture is worth it. But it can rarely be removed unless it is of a different composition to the vehicle used in painting, and frequently it is not. The picture restorer is rather a terror. Sometimes he proves a picture destroyer.

### WATER COLOUR

We come at last to the modern darling of the English people, Water Colour. There is a prevalent notion that it is but a kind of threshold to greater technical mysteries beyond. Perhaps this arises from the fact that it is a method of the nursery and the school, to say nothing of the student-amateur. The real truth is, that so far from being easy, water colour grows more and more difficult as one progresses.

Water-colour paintings, or "drawings" as they are con-

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ventionally called (because when water colours were first used on paper they were applied as "tints" on drawings), are capable of two distinct methods. The colours may be flooded on in a perfectly liquid state, or they may be mixed with Chinese White which renders them semi-liquid and opaque, when they can be applied with the degree of spissitude the painter prefers. But in this form they more or less obscure the paper, and reflect light only from the paint-surface. In the quite liquid method the colour does not obscure the whiteness of the paper, which thus reflects light *through* the colour to which it gives brilliancy and airiness. This method is known as "pure wash"; the other as "body colour." Both methods were at one period frequently employed in the same drawing; the body colour being used for finishing touches upon the pure wash. But the mixture of methods is now discredited and pure wash has become the more pre-eminent alternative.

Body-colour painting has its difficulties, but they are limited by the artist's natural powers, and thus resemble the difficulties of tempera, oil, or any other medium. But pure wash differs from every other method of expression in having difficulties of an adventitious character that are almost beyond human control. It is true that numerous artists work with signal success in pure wash; but the fact remains that it is the most exasperatingly difficult medium in the whole scope of graphic art. "And yet children and amateurs splash away with the utmost lightness of heart," the reader will add. That is so. They "splash away." That is what everybody does, and trusts to luck.

If we, in our righteous determination to express exactly what we feel, place a touch of oil colour upon a canvas, we can first of all satisfy ourselves that it is what it should be in hue and tone before it leaves the palette; and, having applied it, we know that it will stay where it is put, in normal circumstances, without appreciable change of shape, tint, or tone for years. An artist can therefore find a true and just mirror or echo of his idea; a registration of the point to which his knowledge and skill has attained. The dab of oil paint is himself, so to speak, unbettered, unspoiled by any adventitious agency. In water colour such a dab does not stay where it is

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put ; it spreads, or runs down in obedience to gravity, and it dries a different strength to that which it assumes when wet. It is seldom at once what the artist meant. Possibly it is worse than he meant. If it is prettier than he meant it may charm his wife looking over his shoulder ; but to him the prettiness is hateful, for it mocks his determined intention. Were it a dab of oil paint, he could supplement it with another dab, improving its shape, adjusting its colour or its tone. Subsequent touches would combine perfectly with the earlier, and finally the artist would be satisfied. Let him at his peril try to do the same with water colour ! A second touch on a wet dab will cause a revolution among the molecules of pigment. They will rush away in fright to the limits of the first dab and crowd there in a manner to make the tone darker and the colour intenser, whilst the other parts of the dab will be denuded and look pale and silly. If the first dab was dry when the second came there is no collusion between the two. They remain separately one over the other. There will be three varieties : one where the first colour is untouched, the next where the second stands alone, and the third where both together have set up a double strength of colour and tone. This is only one of the embarrassments that await the artist. There are too many others for complete description, but this is typical and may be taken as applying not only to small touches but to extensive washes, aggravated by the factors of too much water or not enough, the breaking through of one colour into the domain of another, the touching of one passage before it is dry enough, in which case, instead of putting more on you lift off what is already there, and countless other wilful tricks of the medium.

What is to be done ? Nothing. The golden rule of water-colour painting is "Let it alone." The more you correct it the worse it gets. You do your best and trust to luck. You cannot draw, properly speaking, and you cannot colour with that single reliance on your judgment that other mediums permit. You "let it alone" and "wait and see." It is a gamble. If you do exert moral courage enough to let it alone you will get something that is beautiful in quality, bright, and clever-looking. And there we have it ! Modern water colour

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is *clever-looking*. It is not really clever, because the merest duffer can splash away and let it alone. That is why so many incompetent water-colourists pass for clever people. Water colour is too supremely difficult for anybody but dexterous geniuses who can fight it and beat it. They do this by thoroughly learning its perverse tricks and turning them to account.

We do not look for that marvellous correctness and conviction of truth in a Sargent water-colour sketch that we see in his oil portraits where his will controlled all. His water colours are wizardry — sleight-of-hand performances — astonishingly true considering the circumstances. Turner's later water colours of this kind are airy poetic suggestions—dreams of landscape effects and romantic scenes evoked from washes of blue, red, and yellow. But they are not Téméraires and Polyphemuses.

Modern water-colour painting seems now to be reverting to its infancy in securing draughtsmanship by a pencil outline, over which a few light tints are flicked that sometimes do not even rise to the power of suggestion. An outline has become the new convention. It is not always in pencil: often it is pen-work; more often a brush drawing in colour that is thick enough not to run; and the real water-colour quality comes, if it will, in a separate series of washes.

Nineteenth-century work in this medium was not the touch-and-go process it is to-day. The colour was applied deliberately up to prescribed outlines. The skies and distances were "washed down" repeatedly—a process which gave them airy evenness. Lights were "taken out" with bread, with india-rubber, with a penknife. Touches were added by means of a fine brush, and delicate shadings by tiny dots and strokes called respectively "stipple" and "hatches." This style of work has no chance of recognition in any Society's gallery to-day. It is obsolete—except in the auction room, where people still bid high for Birket Fosters. The object of all these resources was to arrive at the complete realisation that oil painting had achieved. Water colour emulated even the richness and power of oil, as well as that exhaustive detail painting the Netherlands had exhibited. Size, also, was an ambition;

and although the area of Tintoretto's "Paradise" was impossible, yet immense sheets of paper were joined together to make water colours as large as might be.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century artists began to see that this emulation of the realism and grandeur of oil painting was a mistake; and they proceeded to exploit the peculiar characteristics of water colour: its limpidity, its amenability in the representation of light; the quality of airiness inherent in the medium; its clarity and brilliance when colours were laid and left; above all, that directness and simplicity in operation by which a momentary mood could find expression. This new attitude revived interest in the earlier methods by which water colour developed from a few flat washes to the triumphs of the Norwich School and yet remained pure water colour. The charm of this earlier work was a feeling of strength and nobility expressed in broad, full-toned washes. Tones and colours were generalised to an extreme degree and arrived at a beauty that was Art's more than it was Nature's. It is this manner that is now in the ascendant. Critics and committees will not have Nature for her own sake: they appraise by skill alone. Some of the most successful artists, in a worldly sense, have an outlook entirely their own: not a real outlook—they do not really see as they paint, but they paint always as though they did see like nobody else. This gives them distinction, and that is what critics and committees like. A few honest souls—the older men—try to combine a naturalistic idealism with a pure water-colour method. They make eloquent and realistic sketches that capture Nature's less obvious truths; but these beautiful notes do not amount to pictures; and the men who can do them are extremely few.

Before leaving the subject of painting, some attention must be given to the matter of sheen or glare, which militates so much against its complete enjoyment. This nuisance is not confined to oil painting. Every kind of painting suffers in a degree from the same purely physical fact of light reflection. There is a best way to see even an unglazed water colour. The fact is that light rays which strike a surface are reflected off that surface at precisely the same angle from the perpendicular. If,



in a room, the light from a window comes at an angle, say, of 45 degrees, on to a picture it will rebound from the picture at that angle further into the room. When, therefore, a spectator is at a spot on that line of 45 degrees from the picture he will get the window light in his eye. If the picture is glazed he will see the window as in a mirror. If it has no glass but is highly varnished the result will be practically as bad. If it is neither glazed nor varnished, there will still be enough reflected light from it to drown the work. In fact, anything short of black velvet would throw some embarrassing rays into the spectator's eye at that angle. By standing immediately opposite a picture facing a window : that is, by standing back to the window to see a picture on the opposite wall, the result is even worse ; because in this case the light strikes the picture at right angles to its surface and therefore is reflected back again on the same line into the eye. To see to the best advantage the spectator must look nearly in the same direction as the light rays proceed, but from a spot that will avoid the meeting of rays returned from the picture surface. This spot is easily found. In Victorian times it was the custom to tilt pictures as they hung on a wall, a plan which solved all difficulty. Modern ideas, which put an aimless " decoration " before every real home joy and comfort, do not sanction this.

Picture-gallery windows are usually high up enough to make the angle of reflection too wide to do much harm to vision. But an equally annoying condition has come about in recent years. Pictures in galleries are now covered with glass. When gas lighting, with its ruinous fumes, was the rule the pictures were unprotected. Now that electric light is universal, and deleterious gases and vapours of all sorts have been all but eliminated in our large cities, we glaze the pictures. If they are dark ones we do not see them in consequence : we only see the reflection of our own images in them. And whether they be light or dark we see reflected the upper parts of a wall in all its various and succeeding high-keyed tints as a distressing bright cloud enveloping everything. This could be largely remedied by returning to, and adhering to, the sober wall-colouring of former years instead of allowing one curator

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after another to try experiments in "new art" on the walls of galleries. A dark frieze would halve the annoyance. An alternative plan would be to suspend a valance of black velvet longitudinally along the gallery at such a height as to intercept these upper reflections from the opposite upper wall into the glasses of the pictures.

Electric light, unless specially schemed for "daylight" properties, is disastrous to the colour of pictures, and this is the drawback to the latest method of displaying pictures in rooms not lit by the light of day. They glisten and glow with a hot piercing light that is fair neither to yellows nor blues, and the frames "shriek," if they are gilt.

### MULTIPLE PROCESSES

The first engravers of any kind were our old friends, the prehistoric artists, who gouged out lines on horns and tusks in drawing their reindeer and salmon. This scratching of decorations on various objects doubtless continued through the centuries. Homer has much to say about the usual decoration of metals. Arms, especially swords, were engraved with runes and fancy names (such as "Excalibur," "Durandal," and "Nothung") as well as elaborate ornaments, by incised lines and spaces which were sometimes filled in with a more precious metal or with enamel. Six hundred years before the Christian era, that Glaucus of Chios, whom we have noted as the inventor of soldering, practised, some say invented also, the art of damaskeening. Perhaps he introduced it into Damascus. It was simply making holes and grooves in the metal and filling them with wire of a more precious metal, burnished in. When we come to the time of metal workers in Florence of the fifteenth century we find the art of engraving designs on arms, armour, and all kinds of metal objects developed to a very delicate and beautiful degree of skill. Bright metals were treated with "niello" work: so called because of a dark enamel with which the lines of the design were reinforced. When Florentine smiths wished to see the effect of the work they were engaged upon, they filled up the lines with a black paste instead of the final hard enamel.

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### ENGRAVING ON METAL

It is claimed by Vasari, with echoes by subsequent historians, that a discovery by Finiguerra, a Florentine, led in 1460 to a practice among the *niellatori* of filling the lines of a sulphur cast of their engraved metal with printer's ink and pressing paper upon it, with the result that they got an impression of the design with clean sharp lines ; and that this circumstance establishes Finiguerra as the inventor of line engraving on metal. But German engravings exist that are dated as early as 1446 ; and it must remain a disputed point as to where the first examples of engraving appeared. The British Museum claims to have nearly a hundred signed engravings by Martin Schoengauer (1445-1491), and the beautiful plates of Dürer are the basis of his fame. In Italy a contemporary of Finiguerra, Baccio Baldini, introduced plates for the engraving of designs for whom Pollajuolo (1432-1498), the famous painter, goldsmith and sculptor, furnished drawings, as did also Botticelli (1444-1510). The latter supplied illustrations to a reprint of Dante's works, and this edition is supposed to be the first book ever embellished with copperplate engravings. Mantegna had already become distinguished as a *niellatore*. The first engraver of great note is Marcantonio Raimondi (1484-1534). He had commercial as well as artistic enterprise ; for, seeing some proofs of Dürer's that had been brought to Venice, he purchased them and purloined their matter, as well as landscape fillings by Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533). This brought Dürer to Venice, where a lawsuit was instituted, in which the complainant got nothing but an injunction against the wrongful use of his monogram. Raphael commissioned Raimondi to engrave designs, and the co-operation resulted in much success for them both.

The method of plate engraving is simplicity itself. The craftsman ploughs lines out of the face of the plate with an instrument called a "graver" or "burin" : a steel rod of lozenge, and sometimes of triangular section, pointed at a slope at the end to form a diamond shape. This cuts a V-shaped furrow by being pushed in the direction of the required line. To do this with ease and accuracy, however, was anything but simplicity itself. The engraver had to learn to cut at

various depths ; to make sweet curves ; to make straight lines ; to keep his lines parallel ; to begin and end them as tapering to a point without harshness ; to cross them with regularity and in various ways. Later craftsmen also learnt a variety of methods in lining ; for engravings were eventually made in "pure line," in "stipple" (little dots), or in a mixture of both.

In stipple engraving the burin gave place to a small tool, the tip of which was furnished with a kind of claw, which picked holes in the copper plate. These holes were deep and close in the shadows, and more separated and shallower in the lights. When stipple was used in conjunction with pure line the dots were interlined and also inserted in the lozenge-shaped interstices of the crossed lines ; or, again, they were used to grade off the light shading by continuing an engraved line.

It was not exclusively for the reproduction of drawings by painters that the engravers worked. Indeed, the dissemination of prints with original designs served in Germany a distinct social purpose. Broadsides, caricatures, and portraits were eagerly collected when books were rare. They anticipated the newspaper to some extent. Not until later times, still innocent of copyright law, was it found advantageous to issue a plate which was a copy of a picture already a favourite. Such a work incurred the pay of the engraver alone, the artist's fee being avoided.

Historians attribute the popularity and success of copper engraving in Germany to the same influences that brought about the Reformation ; coincident, or nearly so, with the spread of plate printing. It is suggested that the poetic, allegorical, and *genre* subjects which occupied the painter-engravers were eagerly appreciated as a revolt from the mediævalism and clerical mythology of pre-Reformation religion.

In the sixteenth century a school of engravers known "The Little Masters" because of the small scale of their works, produced beautifully rich and sparkling designs. This group included Aldegrever, Barthel and Sebald Behem, Pencz, and Binck, in the sixteenth century. Hans Sebald Behem is only eclipsed by Dürer himself.

Of the whole output of German plate engraving perhaps

the finest work is Dürer's "Melencolia." For me this print has had a mysterious attraction since the days of childhood, and I still think it one of the greatest allegorical creations in Art. A description given in Richard Ford Heath's "Albrecht Dürer" is worth quoting for its full response to the psychological stimulus of the plate's content: "'All that we know is, nothing can be known.' Is not this the feeling which possesses the soul of that unsatisfied woman, who sits with her cheek resting on her left hand, while the right hand falls upon a closed book, hardly retaining its hold of the compass which has measured out nothing for her? Her hair is unbound, though it just keeps up the laurel crown upon her brow. Every imaginable implement of art, of lawful and of unlawful science, lies about her—each has been used in vain; the magic crystal has disclosed nothing; the figures on the wall, each row ever exhibiting the mystical number 34, have been reckoned over and over again to no purpose: the heavens show a comet and a rainbow, but no more; the bat which hovers over the water holds outstretched a scroll on which is written *Melencolia. I.* By her side there perches upon a grindstone the form of a winged child, like a desponding Cupid whose frolics are over. Sphinx-like she sits ever, a woman disdaining her womanhood, weighed down with thought, but restlessly looking into the unsolved mysteries of existence, while the great wings which she bears seem eager to essay another flight into the darkness of the inscrutable.

The number I. upon the scroll seems to show that this plate is the first of the series of the *Temperaments*."

It might be added that this work is evidence of Dürer's irreproachable draughtsmanship. The drawing of the woman's head is Michelangelesque. In this respect it rises above the particular kind of draughtsmanship that characterises all German engraved work; for that is exhaustive delineation of small detail engagingly invented, as here, in the hour-glass above the woman's head; and it is this kind of drawing that is the customary understated measure of Dürer's merit. This plate was finished at a time of mental anxiety and depression; but that circumstance seems only to have increased the profundity of feeling and in no way to have impaired the quiet,



MEINCOLIA  
DÜRER



FACSIMILE OF "LITTLE MASTERS" ENGRAVING  
 H. SEBALD BEHEM

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slow, and interminable work of the graver, every touch of which is that of a transcendent master. Another biographer, Anton Springer,\* has discovered in the magic square on the wall a reference to the death of the artist's mother. For further investigation of this point the reader is referred to Appendix IV.

When we compare the vacuity of "art for art's sake" with the full psychological significance of works like the "Melencolia" we can understand why modern graphic art has lost interest for the people.

The German engraving, as exemplified in Dürer's work, compares with Italian contemporary engraving in being much fuller of material. The designs of the south were simpler and the engraving less small in particular objects and accessories. Except in "Melencolia," which has a sense of planes and aerial perspective, the German work is wanting in these qualities; and it is their absence, and the method of treating all parts of a plate alike, that gives the plates of the "Little Masters" their all-over richness and jewel-like brilliance.

Two talented engravers were trained in turn by Rubens to produce his designs. Their names were Vosterman and Pontius. Rubens was content to maintain the convention, systematised by Raphael, of light and shade fitted to make an effective plate rather than to attempt the tone-values and colour luminosities with which a painting deals. Such qualities were instinctively studied by painters, though perhaps not theoretically at that time; but they were qualities not considered to be applicable to an engraving, which treated scenes rather as though they were models in plaster of Paris than coloured texturous objects in atmosphere.

The Italians began with an emphasised outline including broad and simple shading. The "lining" was studied sedulously by Raimondi under Raphael and attained to a broad and masterly style. As communication continued between the north and the south of the Alps many of the characteristics were exchanged, to the benefit of both schools.

In France a strong and skilful tradition was founded by these influences; and by the eighteenth century French

\* "Albert Durer," Berlin, 1892.



engraving had achieved great reputation under the unsurpassed skill of the Drevets, Edelinck, and Nanteuil. The phase actually commenced with portraits after the Court painters of Louis XIV., Rigaud, Largillière and others. Nanteuil was both a painter and an engraver, excelling in both arts. After the era of Louis XIV. a new choice of subject came into vogue. It was in the "Fête galante" spirit which followed the pompous decorum of the Sun King. Watteau and his followers first, Boucher, Fragonard and their imitators next, continued to design light-hearted subjects for a set of engravers who have never been surpassed in their own line. Moreau, le jeune (1741-1814), one of the best designers of a rather later period, was well served by the engraver, N. J. Voyez. By this time the art had been pushed to delicacy and prettiness, softness of effect having taken the place of the old Italian tradition of virility.

In England stipple engraving flourished in the hands of Bartolozzi at the end of the eighteenth century, when this country was rather given over to foreign talent. A sort of weak and pretty echo of classical subject-matter by Cipriani, Angelica Kaufmann and others, found the melting effect of stipple engraving, especially when printed in brick red, extremely popular.

By the nineteenth century engraving had come to concern itself with problems of tone-values for the reproduction of pictures. Original subjects were no longer the fashion. The landscapes of Claude had taught engravers the pictorial value of gradation and aerial perspective. Turner's works maintained the tradition, and by his own informing exactions with engravers, brought even greater burin triumphs within reach.

Steel was now substituted for copper: it lasted longer, even when copper had been "steel-faced." The characteristic of steel-engraving was great refinement and delicacy; and its furthest point in this direction was reached in the plates made of Turner's views: "The Rivers of England," "England and Wales," Rogers' "Italy," "The Rivers of France." His biographer, W. Cosmo Monkhouse, says of these series that they "were engraved with matchless skill by that trained band of engravers who brought, with the artist's assistance, the art of

engraving landscapes in line to a point never before attained. . . . Goodall, Wallis, Willmore, W. Miller, Brandard, Radcliffe, Jeavons, W. R. Smith and others." For my part, I rejoice to put once more in print these names so undeservedly obscure to all but connoisseurs.

This mode of illustrating books met with widespread approval, and large numbers of impressions were demanded for "Books of Beauty," "Landscape Annuals," and works of that nature, in which, whatever may have been the grade of excellence in the designs, the engravings usually showed a charm lacking in modern reproductions. At length came that shock of discontinuance—which ever grows more sudden as the ages pass—when photographic means were discovered for putting a subject on a plate and automatic processes for engraving it.

#### WOOD-ENGRAVING

There was a still earlier way by which the reproduction of books and pictures was made possible. Before this blessing was known to mankind, books had to be written by hand, one at a time, on vellum, and illustrated and decorated by the missal painter. But the introduction of paper-making from the East set men thinking how they might turn its plenty and cheapness to the making of books and so avoid the costly parchment. Blocks had already been used in Germany for playing cards, and elsewhere for the outlines of decorative characters in the written books. They were used as stamps and their lines filled in with colour. The printing machine made its appearance almost at the same time as paper, and the engraved wood block was inevitable. The design was cut upon a small "plank" of wood (that is, a lengthwise section with the grain), and with it also the letters of the reading or "text" that should accompany it. The characters were, of course, all reversed, so that when the block was inverted in the printing process the final result looked like script by a reed pen, which had also made the drawing. It must be obvious that what was cut away in the wood was everything that was not wanted in the printed result. The "work" was left at the original level of the plank. This is the principle of "relief

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printing" as opposed to "intaglio printing." Specimens of this industry are known as "block-books." (See page 253.)

The next step was soon taken. Movable types were made for all the letters, and "set up" with the picture block, all tightly wedged into an iron frame called a "form." Thus was "relief printing" launched for the advancement of humanity on the ocean of knowledge, where it proceeded without change in principle until the last decade of the nineteenth century, when the invention of the "Meisenbach" block (now called the "half-tone" block), one of the results of photography, altered the whole system of book illustration, threw a highly-skilled community out of work, and killed the earliest of the crafts concerned with graphic art, to its irreparable loss. This is progress—of a kind.

The finest wood-engraving was executed in Germany in the sixteenth century by craftsmen who cut the designs which Albert Dürer, Holbein, and others supplied. The engraver—"Formschneider," as he was called—worked under the artist's direction, an arrangement that produced a most happy fusion of contributive effort.

In principle, sixteenth-century wood-engraving was the best, for the reason that it gave by the simplest means the richest and brightest effect. All the forms were treated with a bold statement of light and shade without any regard to their relationship to the natural conditions of a scene. The lights were white and the deepest shades black, whilst two or three middle tones at most made up the chief area of the composition relieved by the sparkling whites and blacks. These middle tones were arrived at by close lines which usually *crossed* a form and rarely flowed *with* it. That is to say that drapery folds, limbs, tree trunks were shaded boldly by transverse lines. Holbein issued a series of small designs illustrating "The Dance of Death," where this principle is well exemplified.

As the art progressed it became less original in subject-matter, attempting to reproduce exactly the lines of a drawing. The lines in a drawing are usually crossed to deepen the shading. This is known as "cross-hatching." When, therefore, a wood-engraver made an exact copy of all such lines, he was



Millesimo cccc°  
xx° anno :sk

ST. CHRISTOPHER. CENTRE FIGURES FROM THE EARLIEST KNOWN DATED  
WOOD BLOCK, 1423

(Slightly reduced)



ILLUSTRATION TO "FABLIAUX" BY LE GRAND  
THOMAS BEWICK  
*(Facsimile of a Wood Block)*



AN EXAMPLE OF "WHITE LINE" INTERPRETATION OF A PHOTOGRAPH  
*(One of the last specimens of the Wood Engraver's Art)*

forced to cut not lines, as formerly, but the minute white interstices between the lines which were to print black. This changed wood-engraving from an original art to a laborious craft. Nevertheless, the method continued to develop with even more elaborations until recent times. Boxwood came to be used exclusively, bolted together for large areas, and cut upon the grain section, not on the "plank." Pen drawings were "*facsimiled*"—a technical term—and all the varying appearance of mixed methods in drawing, such as outline and wash, charcoal, and oil painting (with brush marks) were patiently imitated. But one man, Thomas Bewick (1753–1828) had already taken the independent course of working in the old way of "white line" engraving. He avoided all the labour of imitating cross-hatching and cut his lights out of the virgin black with simple strokes of the "graver." In 1790 was published his famous "Natural History of Quadrupeds," the cuts for which he drew and engraved. He likewise illustrated stories and fables. A proof of one of these blocks which I am fortunate enough to possess is here reproduced. Yet in spite of the followers his example gathered, wood-engraving relapsed into the elaborations of facsimile work, reaching its highest level in the periodical publications of the eighteen-eighties. Only where a wood-engraver could escape the thrall of facsimile work, as in the reproduction of a photograph, was he able to interpret by a white-line method. A specimen is given of a splendidly virile piece of work of this kind from a weekly newspaper of 1881. A last effort, and a most successful one, in interpretive engraving, as opposed to imitative, was made in an American magazine by Timothy Cole, whose versions of the Old Masters of painting were remarkable for their accuracy, beauty, and purity of style. Some were so finely cut as to look like tone rather than line productions. Later subjects were more boldly cut, but all were instinct with artistic feeling. They were the swan song of the art. "Process" reproduction by the aid of photography was already being perfected as the blocks of Timothy Cole appeared.

The wood blocks of old have been destroyed in hundreds of thousands, and it is inevitable that good prints from the best

will be treasured in the future. For wood-engraving, equally with metal-engraving, is a fine art at its best. As a reproductive process for drawings it is, in my opinion, to be preferred to the mechanical processes now universally used, which are in one way too exact, and in another not interpretive enough. The artists who worked for the publishers of the late nineteenth century knew exactly what the blocks would give them, and how to draw for a brilliant and truthful effect. Their results were less at the mercy of printing vagaries than are the photographs that have now entirely replaced them.

### ETCHING

A sketch of some sort was usually the first stage of the processes we have so far considered, and they must be regarded as interpretive in their purpose, in spite of the fact that wood-engravers have been known to cut, straight away, designs "out of their head." Plate-engravers may have done the same often enough, but such a *tour de force* would be exceptional, largely because artists, as a rule, have not the use and the material for this method of expression. With etching the case is different: its method favours spontaneity. There is scarcely a painter who has not at some time or another etched a plate or two. And yet etching comes generically under engraving, since the methods of printing are all but the same in both cases.

The word "etching" comes from the Dutch (*etsen* = to eat). This implies that the work upon a copper plate is not ploughed out by a burin but eaten out. The process, in simple terms, is as follows. A copper plate is polished and covered with a "ground" composed of bitumen and wax. It is then blackened by the smoke of a waxen torch and its back and edges covered with a protecting varnish—usually Brunswick black. The plate is thus encased in an acid-resisting envelope. The design to be etched may be transferred or drawn direct upon the ground, more or less meticulously. Then the needling takes place. Lines are scratched upon the wax ground in a way to remove it and leave the copper bare. In the "needling," as much individuality occurs as would happen in a drawing. This is the charm of etching. There are a thousand and one ways of expression in getting the work on to

the plate, as there are also in drawing with a pen or pencil. The lines may be as free as absolute scribble. The excellent etchings of Dr. Seymour Haden were largely scribble in the right place. Or they may amount to a careful and orderly laying of small lines in the manner of Lalanne, the accomplished French etcher. Between these extremes etching lends itself admirably to the spontaneous motives and moods of the artist ; and there is not another process that so smoothly and exactly responds to the touch without the embarrassments of technical complications. The copper being thus laid bare in parts, the plate is immersed in a bath of corrosive acid—usually dilute nitrous—and the etching starts with bubbles that are cleared away with the tip of a feather.

If a plate were limited to this treatment it would show, when printed, a slight extra etching where the lines were close together ; but the chiaroscuro effect of the design would depend upon the grouping of the lines and not upon their strength. If one could make a drawing in black with a needle point it could only present any strength of effect by reason of a concentration of lines in certain parts, and it would be a poor thing at the best. Etching, like engraving, relies upon a principle of fine lines and stronger lines ; and those that are required to be strong are etched deeper and wider. After a very few moments in the bath the plate is taken out and all those lines that should remain fine are “stopped out” ; that is, covered over with a “stopping-out varnish” which protects them from further corrosion. The plate is then re-immersed and again withdrawn for a second stopping out of those lines that by now have become strong enough. A plate may thus be subjected to as many “bitings” as the etcher desires. It is said that Samuel Palmer (1805-1881) gave one of his plates seventy bitings. He preferred this method to the alternative of scratching heavier lines by thicker or chisel-pointed needles.

When all is done the plate is cleaned and proved. All intaglio hand-printing is done in the same way. The plate is inked by having a thick ink like very stiff paint forced into its lines by a dabber—a wad tied up in leather and used with a strong rocking pressure. When the lines are full of ink the face of the plate is wiped with the palm of the hand in such a



way as to leave the ink in the lines, the hand being kept half-clean on the etcher's apron, and passed lightly over a lump of whiting between the wipes. The plate is then laid upon the bed of a roller machine, damped paper laid upon it, a piece of blanket next and then it is passed under the roller. The pressure forces the damp paper into every line and the ink adheres.

It will be understood that etching is only difficult when much is demanded of it ; that treated as a simple and spontaneous exercise the artist can satisfy himself with far less labour and worry than would attach to other methods of engraving. It is a very old process, and from the time of Dürer has been used as a kind of pioneer work for line-engraving ; the burin enforcing the etched line. In the hands of Rembrandt it varied between giving the slightest sketch of a head to the mature elaboration of "The Death of the Virgin." Rembrandt seems to have enjoyed etching to the full. He made ample use of the resources for alteration and correction which the process offers. For example, work that is not too deep may be entirely removed by a "scraper," which is a sharp instrument of triangular section ; and the plate may be hammered up from the back to supply the ravages of the scraper if the work is deeply bitten. A burnisher can be used for closing up lines that are too dark (widely bitten) and a reduction of force can be brought about by rubbing the plate with the end of a section of charcoal. Rembrandt made more drastic alterations than most etchers, and frequently obliterated with new work much that had already been carefully done.

A striking example of this prodigality of labour finally made subsidiary is seen in his triumphant etching of "The Three Trees." The distance is a bay, the horizon being the sea. At the right of the bay is a headland. Further to the right is rising ground in a flood of light. In front of this is the windmill most easily seen, but there are one or two others. At the foot of this mill are buildings, and beyond it, ploughed fields with the furrows in various directions. Cutting against the sea and sky is a town with all its towers, roofs, spires, and trees. A wood, half in light and half in shade, stands just before the town on the left. Between this wood and the mill the ground





THE THREE TREES  
REMBRANDT

is cut up with a number of waterways, on the edges of which trees grow, and amongst which are cattle and figures, all drawn with thoughtful individuality. The trunks of the three trees are rendered with much character of growth and picturesqueness, and the same is true of the verdure beyond them. Between the trees and the crest of the hill is a hamlet or group of farm buildings. Along the crest runs a road upon which is seen a waggon full of men, returning from work, presumably, as the sun is low. A peasant stands looking at them as they pass. Nearer, the bank rises to hide the road, revealing only the body and whip of the driver of another vehicle. In the foreground shadow of the rising ground is an animal of some kind, and on the nearest bank of the river as it curves round to the left from the foreground are two quaint figures fishing, one of whom is in a gleam of light.

But all this is mere fill-up, delightful as it is to pore over. The great message of the etching is the effect of the sky in conjunction with the trees: an effect which has never failed to touch the spectator during three hundred years. Rembrandt did not glory in this mass of detail so lovingly and livingly put in: he let it all go as padding—tone, or what etchers call “work,” and few spectators see it or need to see it. In the full-size of an original print it is only completely revealed by the aid of a magnifying glass. It is interesting to note in “The Three Trees” that Rembrandt was, in his way, quite as fascinated with the detail of the landscape as Dürer was when he filled the pockets of his designs with a deluge of tiny facts, architectural, botanical, zoological, and humanistic. The difference in the final effect of each artist’s method is, however, important. Dürer’s detail is significant. It must not be passed over; it is part of the design and of the conception. Rembrandt’s, though almost as searching, and far more literally true to Nature, is not noticed at all. He did not intend that it should tell as more than “work” to supply suggestive tone. Logical and profound as he was, he preferred to employ his needle on actual realistic detail rather than do as most other etchers have done—supply tone for effect by mere filling of lines or scribble, in itself signifying nothing, but efficiently artistic in what it may signify in the large effect.

## THE LURE OF THE FINE ARTS

Of all the painters who used the etching needle certainly Rembrandt has left the finest and greatest accumulation. Claude did but few, and those entirely in the spirit of his paintings. Perhaps Van Dyck is next in importance in this respect, with a magnificent series of portraits, his "Iconography." In later days Turner employed the etched line as a framework for his "Liber Studiorum," adding mezzotint to express tone. But the Liber etchings are beautiful in themselves, and to some, all-sufficient, since the beauty of his forms and the structure of his compositions are seen to great advantage in the proofs that exist of the earlier states of the plates before the mezzotint was added. (See plate facing page 53.)

Giovanni Piranesi (1720-1778) became famous for his amazingly clever etchings of Roman views and antiquities. They were large and elaborate plates, and the classic revival in taste and architecture which followed their publication has been attributed to Piranesi's enthusiasm.

After falling into neglect the art of Etching was revived in the nineteenth century in France, and England saw its development on differing lines by Samuel Palmer, Whistler, Seymour Haden and others. At the same time it began to be used as an interpretive medium for the painted picture, when colour luminosities and textures formed new aims of technique. How far elaboration would have proceeded in this direction cannot be said; for the "photogravure" processes supplied cheaper methods and supplanted etching as a reproduction process immediately. The art is now enjoying a most healthy survival in the hands of a great many artists who name themselves "painter-etchers." They have, for the most part, returned to original work and to the legitimate pure line methods that do not seek to imitate the qualities of painting, but are concerned with the effects of chiaroscuro: and these are more germane to the best and most legitimate possibilities of the art.

### DRY-POINT

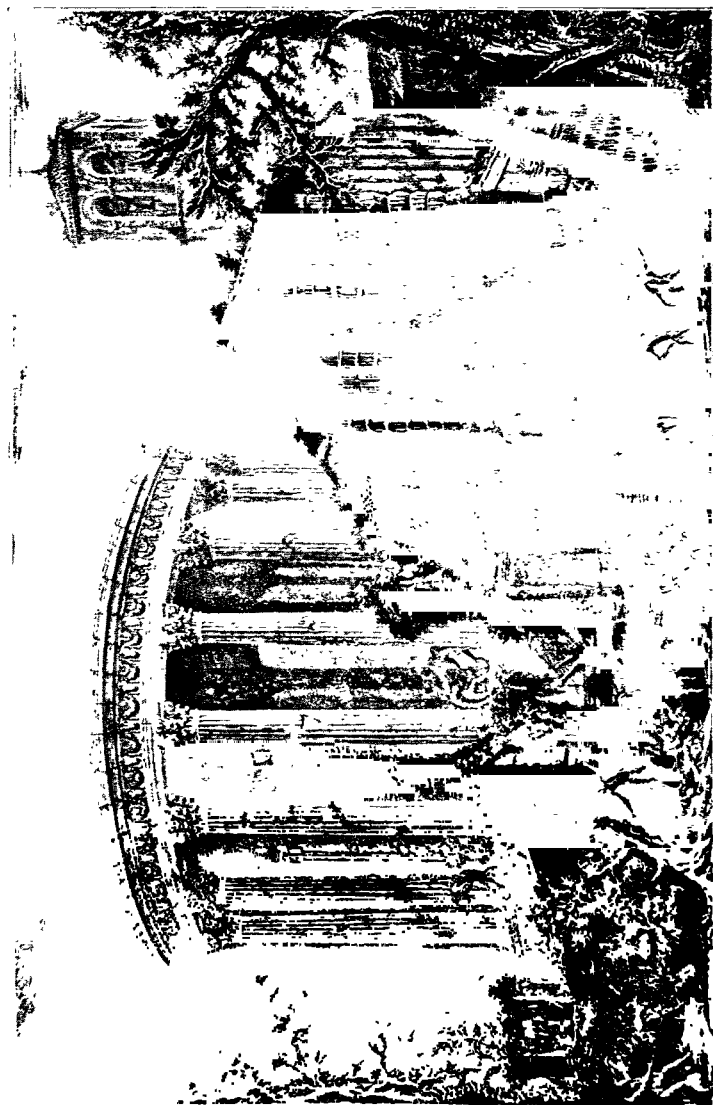
This is an alternative style of work in which it is possible to produce the utmost delicacy of line together with a rich and full tone. It is done by the use of a heavy steel tool sharpened



LE CHEVRIER  
CLAUDE  
(After an etching)



APULIA IN SEARCH OF APULIUS  
TURNER  
(The etching of an unpublished plate of "Liber Studiorum")



THE TEMPLE OF THE SIBYL, TIVOLI  
PIRANESI

*By courtesy of Messrs J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.*

*[To face page 351]*

## THE MEDIUM OF EXPRESSION

to a point which makes incisions upon a polished plate not covered by a ground. For fine lines a scraper is used to remove the "burr" thrown up by the point as it travels along the copper. When this roughness is not removed it retains a large amount of the ink when the plate is wiped, and this, printing with a very agreeable velvety quality, affords masses of rich blacks.

### MEZZOTINT

A burr such as dry-point produces is the basic principle of mezzotint engraving, which was invented in the seventeenth century. It differs from all other plate processes by starting not with light and white but with darkness and a black surface. The black surface is got by roughening the plate all over with minute pits and their accompanying burr. The instrument used for the roughening is called a "rocker." It is a kind of chisel of cheese-cutter shape, either held by the hand or, as in the large old mezzotints, placed at the end of a long arm. With its edge (a segment of a circle) on the plate it is rocked to and fro. This action, by reason of the arm, the further end of which rests on the bench, causes the rocker to travel forward by slightly altering the angle of its direction at the end of each rocking movement. With the hand tool the same effect is less automatically achieved. The edge of the tool terminates a series of radial grooves on the side of the blade, and these form a row of sharp teeth along the edge. The rocker is used upon the plate from all of its sides and corners and thus the whole area is passed over many times till the surface is completely roughened, and would, if printed in that state, give a proof of uniform blackness. The work then proceeds with the use of the scraper, by which the roughness is removed, more or less, in accordance with the lights and darks of the subject. The brightest lights are further smoothed with a burnisher so that they can be wiped perfectly clean of ink in the printing. Both copper and steel plates have been used for the production of mezzotints.

The method at once established itself in England in the seventeenth century, attaining its utmost popularity there in the eighteenth. John Smith (1652-1742) was accomplished



and prolific in the art, and John Raphael Smith (1752-1812) a highly reputed worker. Claude's "*Liber Veritatis*," being in pen and wash, gave occasion for an attempt to combine etching and mezzotint for reproduction of the pen outlines and washes respectively, as already mentioned. The engravers employed upon Turner's "*Liber Studiorum*" were Charles Turner, William Say, and Thomas Lupton. Later, David Lucas did good service for Constable in a vigorous series of prints after his landscapes.

Most of the portrait painters, Reynolds pre-eminently, were represented, and among landscapists Morland became a favourite for subjects in mezzotint.

#### AQUATINT

But Turner's earliest plate was completed not in mezzotint, but in aquatint, a method that was first employed in this country by Paul Sandby (1725-1809).

Aquatint requires first a ground which shall not entirely protect the plate, but leave it vulnerable to acid in a haze of minute spots. This end is accomplished either by allowing resin dust to settle on the plate which is next warmed to bring about adhesion; or else by flooding the plate with a solution of resin in spirits of wine. On evaporation the sediment breaks up into fine granulations. By either method the plate is partly protected and partly exposed in a multitude of microscopic holes which if etched and printed would yield an even tone. The etcher proceeds to stop out—that is, to completely protect—the parts he wishes to remain unbitten. He then immerses the plate in the mordant—the biting acid—until his lightest tones will have received depth enough. These are then also stopped out and the plate again immersed to increase the depth of the remaining parts. This alternating goes on until the plate is finished, when the resin is melted off. An example is printed in the Claude plate, facing page 173.

Aquatints were largely used as illustrations as well as wall or cabinet pictures, and were often printed in coloured inks and also coloured by hand. The coloured mezzotint, by the way, is too often an attempt to repair the ravages of wear that would appear in a monochrome impression.

## THE MEDIUM OF EXPRESSION

### SOFT-GROUND ETCHING

This process is frequently used in conjunction with aquatint, its results being similar in character to drawings in a soft pencil or chalk. The plate is covered with an etching ground that has been rendered soft by the admixture of hog's lard. It is applied with the dabber. A drawing is then stretched over the surface and its lines traced with a pencil point. According to the factors of pressure and temperature the ground will adhere to the paper more or less where the point has passed, and will come away with the paper when it is removed, leaving the plate exposed for biting at those parts.

There are a few technical terms used in connection with the engraving processes which it would perhaps be well to explain, and to do so I cannot take a better course than to borrow the words of Professor A. M. Hind from his little British Museum Guide, and quote them as Appendix V.

Das zehent zeichent das sich all greber auff hym von den  
aufgang der sunnen biß anden nydergang der sunnen vnd  
dy dy coten ersten auff den grebern das es dy lebendigen  
sehen



AN EXAMPLE OF BLOCK-BOOK PRINTING, 1430.

*Reduced by one-third linear measurement.*

## CHAPTER IX

### THE "SCHOOLS"

THE term "School" is used in its broadest sense to distinguish national characteristics, as when we speak of "the Attic School of Sculpture" or "the Italian School of Painting," without indicating the sub-divisions of locality and period. In a more restricted sense it is applied to the work of certain areas at a particular period, such as "the Pergamon School," or "the Early Flemish School." With still more restriction, it may be employed, as in "the School of Rembrandt," to group together peculiarities in style due to the following by many of the innovations of one.

#### SCHOOLS OF SCULPTURE

The various schools of sculpture are not so popularly known as those of painting, and there seems no need in this place to treat them with the fulness and precision that a history of Art would impose. Below are therefore given the few great divisions which artistic development indicates up to the subjugation of Greece by the Romans.

#### THE DÆDALIAN

The mythical Dædalus, he who is credited with the construction of the Labyrinth of King Minos at Cnossus in Crete, is, on the same legendary grounds, said to have been the originator of all woodwork and to be the first sculptor of stone. That the earliest images were of wood is clearly proved by classic writers; and those relics of prehistoric stone statuary that have survived, such as the Lion Gate of Mycenæ, and which even in the days of Pausanias were as mysteriously antique as they are to us, usually have their authorship ascribed to Dædalus.

When history begins to creep in and supplant legend, the

## THE "SCHOOLS"

one remarkable fact about statuary is the costly material employed for it. "Cedar wood inlaid with gold," "gold and ivory," "ebony and ivory" are the kind of descriptions the early writers have put on record. When the workers in bronze appear we are told that they gilded their statues. Clearchus of Rhegium used beaten plates of bronze riveted together, as already stated, and a colossal Zeus at Olympia was made by the same method, but of gold! (Imagine its worth to-day.) Soldering, said to have been invented by Glaucus of Chios, followed at about 670 B.C. According to Pausanias, statues were first cast in moulds in the island of Samos.

From Pliny we learn that it was not the custom to make portraits of individuals unless they had won distinction in the sacred games. And the first two so honoured were boxers, in 536 B.C. (Paus. VI. 18).

### THE ARCHAIC AND TRANSITIONAL SCHOOLS

The portraits of victors in races became frequent, though to what extent they were speaking likenesses it is not possible to say, for the heads of such few archaic statues as remain do not reveal much advance beyond the very first attempts at a lifelike face. The images said to represent Apollo at this period have a set and stony smirk, indicating but little emancipation from the purely conventional. The feet of the figures were still placed flat upon the ground even when striding and the arms were close to the flanks. But a Nike or Victory, of about 550 B.C., was discovered at Delos, of which the legs were parted and bent in the action of running. She was also furnished with wings, which was another innovation. This statue belongs to the class of archaic figures which were recently unearthed upon the Athens Acropolis and found to be fully coloured, as already described.

The commemorative sculptures of victorious athletes at first took the form of images of Apollo, but in the rapid development of Hellenic Art they became more human. Muscles and sinews received attention, and possibly points of personal strength and stature were represented. The bodies of the athletes became the schools of nude study. Then came the Persian wars. In repairing the ravages of their beaten

## THE LURE OF THE FINE ARTS

enemies the Greeks were inspired to great heights of achievement. Of the temples that were embellished with commemorative statuary groups, two, particularly, mark this era saliently; one that of Aphaia in Ægina, and the other the temple of Zeus at Olympia. Their pediments were grouped with a sense of design and pattern never before seen in the world's history. Yet in these works there is the same reluctance to attempt any expression of emotion in the faces, although the posing and modelling of the figures is perfect in a generalised way. This sculpture is as truly superhuman in its subject-matter as in its treatment! Trojan heroes in one case, Centaurs and Lapithæ in the other.

With Myron (about 450 B.C.) the emancipation from archaism in the body is all but complete. A copy of his "Discobolus" is preserved at Rome, and another, with the head wrongly restored, in the British Museum. In spite of the vigorous action and the skilful torsion of the body, the woolly negroid treatment of the hair is retained, as well as the placid indifference of facial expression.

### THE ATTIC AND ARGIVE SCHOOLS

Although contemporary with Myron, Phidias (490-432 B.C.) is the supreme figure of Grecian Art. A favourite of Pericles, he superintended the erection of the Parthenon. By him at last the tranquillity of archaic insensitiveness was idealised into intellectual serenity. For all time he fixed the types of Zeus and Athene by his colossal statues of these deities, with a conception of godlike dignity and beauty which has never been, nor could ever be, surpassed, if equalled. With him, although younger, Polyclitus shares almost equal honours. He worked at Argos, and is famous for a statue of Hera, which, like the masterpieces of Phidias, was colossal and of gold and ivory. But he was mainly a worker in bronze, the material of his "Doryphorus," before mentioned as the "canon" of youthful manly beauty. Polyclitus was the first to give a languorous grace to his figures—particularly that of a beautiful Amazon—by throwing out the hip in an attitude of support of the weight by one foot. A like grace distinguishes the Venus de Milo, which Professor S. Reinach believes to be a

veritable work of Phidias. If that be true, then Polyclitus surrenders some of his laurels. In Pliny's *Natural History* (XXXVI.) there is this passage: "Tradition tells that Phidias himself also worked in marble, and that there is an Aphrodite by his hand of surpassing beauty in the gallery of Octavia at Rome." There would certainly have been time enough for it to have been taken to Melos before it was found there in 1820.

After the Peloponnesian War sculptors turned more to human interests than they had done hitherto. Praxiteles (b. 380 B.C.) and Scopas (395-350) invested their figures with gentler and softer lineaments. The "Hermes carrying the child Dionysus," by Praxiteles, is one of the few original works preserved. This and his Cnidian Aphrodite have already been described. Scopas marked a new stage by a more intense feeling in his heads than the meditative ease of Praxiteles reveals. The best-known work attributed to him is the Niobe group. These two sculptors established standards of greater realism without losing the ideality of the Phidian style. A third great sculptor at this time, Lysippus, made a departure in the direction of elegance with a new "canon," as before explained. This was the "Apoxyomenus," eight heads high. Womanly beauty and athletic manhood were the chief aims in the work of Lysippus. His was the so-called Venus de Medici. To this period also belong the remnants of the fine chariot group of Mausolus and Artemisia in the British Museum, with the pathetically beautiful Demeter, seated, and the even more touchingly true "Mourning Woman."

#### POST-ALEXANDRIAN SCULPTURE

Lysippus made a portrait of Alexander which pleased the Emperor so much that no one else was allowed to attempt the same thing. After Alexander's subjugation of Athens, that city lost her sovereignty in Art: the widespread empire fostered other aims than serenity and grace. Virtuosity and feats of skill like the "Farnese Bull," cut from one block of marble, and the "Laocoon"—works of the Rhodian School—were more in demand. At the death of Alexander in 323 B.C. Hellenism was at an end. The art was now Hellenistic only,

## THE LURE OF THE FINE ARTS

and its chief motives were realism. Yet so strong was the influence of hereditary tradition that it was still required to be beautiful before it was natural. The famous "Apollo Belvedere" in the Vatican belongs to this period.

From 268 to 197 B.C. there were invasions of Asia Minor by the Gauls, the victory over whom by Eumenes I. was commemorated at Pergamon by votive bronzes, among which are the now famous "Dying Gaul" and the "Gaul killing himself after killing his Wife." The excellence of these works suggests the hand of Lysippus. Another conquest was celebrated by Eumenes II., 166 B.C., with the erection at Pergamon of a mighty altar, the base of which was discovered in 1880. It carried great areas of high-relief sculptures representing battles between gods and giants and kindred subjects. These marbles have received the highest praise from modern critics, who suppose them to be possibly by Apollonius and Tauriscus, the artists of the Rhodian groups before mentioned.

After Pergamon, Rome became the intellectual and artistic centre. But the Art of Rome was largely based upon the native Etruscan output, mainly of terra cotta and not loftily inspired. At the introduction of Greek artists, however, the Romans found indulgence for their ever-growing love of magnificence, and Art was patronised privately by patrician citizens. In the second century A.D., a group of Greek artists with Menelaus at their head attempted a revival of Art on the lines of traditional idealism and living Nature. One of the results of this effort is the well-known group of Orestes and Electra. As we have seen, Roman taste, in the mass, tended to the encouragement of the more practical portraiture.

Through the middle ages sculpture lay dormant under the crushing weight of Byzantine convention until, revived with gothic naturalism by Pisano, its beauty of Form reappeared with a Content of joy in life in the atmosphere of the Renaissance.

## THE SCHOOLS OF PAINTING

As in the case of sculpture, any completeness in the following category must be disclaimed with apologies as being

beyond the occasion in a book which holds no obligations to historical completeness.

### EARLY FLORENTINE AND SIENESE SCHOOLS

Painting, as we know it, was long supposed to have originated in Italy in the thirteenth century with Cimabue. That belief is, however, at length discredited. Duccio of Siena now bears that honour. But he painted much in the Byzantine style. The Florentine Giotto has a claim to the inculcation of loftier and more natural ideas about Art than have the other two ; but even he, trying to paint things as he saw them and not as the ecclesiastical mode prescribed, could only utter statements that are childish in their faults : their charm lies in their ingenuous sincerity. He inspired Fra Angelico, who painted with an ecstasy of faith, joy, and happiness. But Masaccio imported a virile realism into the somewhat feminine gentleness of this painted piety. He it was who inaugurated the new era of accomplished painting, shutting the door upon primitive shortcomings. His drawing, his light and shade, his perspective, his realistic conceptions and truth to life are all upon the modern side of the dividing line between incompetence and masterly achievement. Masaccio reveals none of those pathetic strivings to attain to something beyond his powers such as we see in Duccio, Giotto and even Fra Angelico. Uccello (1379-1475) invented the battle picture, of which the famous example, "The Rout of San Romano" in the National Gallery, is the delight of children. Verrocchio (1435-1488) discovered light and air for his landscape settings, but is even more famous as a sculptor. His equestrian statue of Colleone in Venice ranks as one of the few greatest in the world. Florentine painting is typified in the sensitiveness of Botticelli. His original genius combined a fine decorative feeling with a winning mysticism. Filippino Lippi (1457-1510) is well represented in the National Gallery, as is also Melozzo (1438-1494), whose works are remarkable for a realistic solidity which is modern in comparison with the simplicities of Giotto and Angelico.

Florentine Art became sensitive and emotional by the alternate fervour and gentleness which religious faith as



## THE LURE OF THE FINE ARTS

preached by St. Francis of Assisi had brought about. The Byzantine *gaucheries* were surpassed by an Art humanised and endowed with a beauty which, although less distant and formal than that of the Greeks, was still austere and ascetic.

### FLEMISH ART

The most famous name arising at this time in Flanders is that of the brothers Van Eyck, Hubert (1366-1426) and Jan (1385-1441), who worked together. It is difficult for experts to distinguish the work of either in the same piece. They rank among the world's eminent geniuses. Jan is considered one of the greatest portraitists of all time, and the landscape settings of both brothers are accorded the highest praise. Yet though infinite patience in recording what they saw makes the work of these brothers of superlative importance, it stops short of beauty in the types. Literal copying of models, often most unprepossessing, employed even for representation of the Virgin, eliminates all suggestion of ideality.

Of less exalted representatives of the Flemish school, some show a deeper religious feeling than the Van Eycks displayed. Van der Weyden (1400-1464), expressed emotion both tender and dramatic. The deepest human qualities are seen in Hans Memling (1430-1494), whose portraits move and fascinate the spectator. But on the whole, the Flemings at this epoch were earnest realists, idealism being foreign to their natures; and although the religious works they produced were devoid of devotion, they were rich in the poetry of common things. Italian influences worked changes in this outlook upon Art; but space forbids more than the mention of Mabuse (1472-1535) in regard to this development; we must return to the gothic period of the Italians themselves.

### EARLIER VENETIAN SCHOOL

Mantegna (1431-1506) worked at Padua, whither Giotto and, later, Donatello came, bringing with them the Florentine elegance and feeling. Mantegna's style had traditions of the classic. It was severely correct and masculine. Padua was tributary to Venice, where there was a school of painting under the Bellini family, and the later glories of the Venetians

are said to be due to Mantegna's influence. Venice was a wealthy, free city, delighting in the joys of life. She had no Savonarolas. Religion was observed without the terrors of the Inquisition. Where in other places the holy personages and saints of Scripture had been represented as austere, and sometimes as ugly, as with the Flemings and Germans, Venice saw no need of such forbidding asceticism. Her Virgins are beautiful women, beautifully adorned. The pleasure in Nature and the arts which Venetians felt was reflected in their religious works depicting holy conclaves of scriptural characters, devoid of the gruesome and the lachrymose element which devotional art evoked elsewhere.

Giovanno Bellini (1430-1516), in his long life and changes of style, kept pace with the developments of the Art about him; first in the stiffness of its Byzantine traditions, and last in the suavity and richness of its maturity and colour. Cima de Conegliano (1460-1517) has already been referred to. His work is typical of the generous luxury of Venetian Art as compared with the asceticism of the Florentine.

In pictures that were not sacred the Venetian imagined ideal conditions for the pastimes of life. In these, beauty was the first consideration. Thus we find idyllic pieces by Giorgione, representing the nude figure in romantic landscape, where the presence of musicians, who add sweet sounds to the sum of delights, is a link between the dream and the actuality of courtly life. It must not be supposed that such a "concert champêtre" is a true picture of the life lived by Venetians. Their ladies were not specially famed for impropriety. Giorgione and his school merely show how far away from realism of the uninspiring sort, from gross literality, their love for beauty had carried them; while they do undoubtedly reflect the joys of Venetian opulence and untroubled pursuit of beauty. Giorgione may be said to have painted an idyllic genre. He was the initiator of the easel picture—a work that could be lifted from the wall—framed separately and made an artistic entity without regard to surroundings.

Venetian painting is accorded the first place in the matter of colour. No longer the tinting of forms as it was in early Florentine work; it somewhat anticipated the colour-vision

## THE LURE OF THE FINE ARTS

of the moderns, who see colour as manifestation of light. Giorgione has the richest blending of full-glowing, luscious hues of all the painters of the Venetian school, Titian excepted. Of the colour of Titian something has already been said. It gives his works a fascinating distinction. His portraits are haunting in the depth of their psychology. In design Titian's sense of the nobility of space and pattern should be studied from reproductions of his work in foreign galleries. Like Giorgione, his master, he sets off the godlike lines of the nude against the splendidly robed figure, combining the two into an idyll both naturalistic and poetic ; but he surpasses him in the dignity of composition. The student will find many masters of this school and epoch represented at the National Gallery into whose work space forbids special enquiry.

### THE GERMAN SCHOOL

The effects of the Renaissance were slow to make themselves felt in Germany. Devoutness and a love of sentiment characterise the work of the early religious painters, most of whom are unknown by name. Art influences from Flanders were largely instrumental in forming "schools," the chief of which was at Cologne. But Germany was not rich and prosperous like Flanders, nor had it the traditions of Italy. Art was patronised and encouraged by the countless small princes who had power to command it ; but the intellectual life of the country did not at this time turn naturally to beauty, nor to truth, as did that of Flanders. Wood-carving suited the German temperament as a practical expression of their sense of actuality in Art, and their methods of carving set a fashion in engraving and painting, particularly in the logically worked out cricks and crooks of drapery, which were more ingeniously mannered than natural.

In painting, the names that stand out are those of Holbein the Younger and Dürer (1471-1528). Holbein approaches nearer to Italian idealism than any other German artist. "The Ambassadors," in the National Gallery, is evidence of Holbein's deep feeling, of his psychological intention in portraiture, and of his full deep colour. In the foreground of this picture is the "amorphous" skull ; that is, a skull depicted as though

## T H E   ‘ ‘ S C H O O L S ’ ’

seen by its reflections in a polished cylinder—an emblem of the death of one of the persons depicted, according to some authorities, and according to others a punning allusion to the artist's name : Hol Bein meaning hollow bone. Another great work of this supreme artist in the National Gallery is the portrait of “ Christiana of Denmark, Duchess of Milan,” at once a dignified and tender example of the restrained taste and human sympathy of Holbein. As a designer of metal work alone his reputation would be among the greatest. Dürer is known best by his engravings on wood and copper. He also had, with his virile draughtsmanship and love of realism in common things, a subtle imagination and poetic sentiment, qualities obvious in the portrait of his father in the National Gallery as well as in the beautiful and profound engraving, “ Melencolia.”

German Art was a popular Art, full of a literalism which was understood by the citizen and the peasant. With its great painters who travelled abroad came a refinement of outlook and a grace of presentment that was worlds removed from the former crudities and ugliness of the work of the native schools.

### MILANESE SCHOOL

The most versatile genius the world ever saw was Leonardo da Vinci of the Milanese School. No department of graphic or plastic art was beyond him ; and as a scientist he brought his marvellous power of thought to bear upon problems that even to-day are occupying the attention of pioneers. He claimed to have invented a flying machine. Yet the date of his birth is 1452. Though never idle, long periods elapsed between his periods of painting, and it was not until later in life that his finest pictures were produced. Schemes of architecture and engineering, military and civil, occupied him, together with researches in chemistry and the intermittent writing of treatises embodying his observations on Nature, Science, and Art. He was likewise an accomplished musician. Paintings from his hand are therefore not numerous, but they are of marked individuality and power. The “ Virgin of the Rocks ” in the National Gallery, of which a replica is in the Louvre, shows the melting quality which Leonardo achieved in opposition to

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the flat angularity of Florentine work. He delighted in the soft creeping light in shaded places. Even the famous portrait of "Mona-Lisa Gioconda" (also in the Louvre), darkened as it is, shows this softened quality. Its eerie incipient smile became the vogue among his followers. He, it is said, found it, as a youth, upon the drawing of a face in the studio of his master, Verrocchio. Leonardo died in 1519, having deeply influenced Italian Art and established his name as one of the "greatest men history can show."

### THE UMBRIAN SCHOOL

There arose a school of painting in Perugia, in which town were born two great masters of the Umbrian School, Perugino (1446-1523) and Pintoricchio (1454-1513). Their work was fresh and childlike, and it was in the atmosphere of their gentle and sweetened Art that the young Raphael (1483-1520) imbibed his ideas, deriving from the latter his ideal of the Madonna. Raphael died at the age of thirty-seven, yet, unlike Leonardo, left behind him a prodigious quantity of works. He has been called the Prince of Painters, and his world-wide and lasting popularity has been attributed to his faculty for combining in his pictures all the qualities of Italian Art that charmed men of taste in his time. He worked at Florence, and gathered much of the humanism of Luca della Robbia. The austerities that were a legacy of mediævalism he left alone. Classical and Christian feeling he displayed equally. His Madonnas are a department of Art in themselves, and our reproduction of the Ansidei Madonna shows with what skill Raphael handled design, employing architectural features with constructive knowledge, which explains the confidence of Popes Julius II. and Leo X., who appointed him architect of St. Peter's at Rome. By the help of talented pupils and assistants he produced, in a life which was one continuous reception of honours, a series of imposing historical, allegorical, and religious compositions. In portraiture he holds his own with any. Nevertheless, there is a prevalent feminine kind of sweetness that distinguishes Raphael's work widely from that of Leonardo and still more from the masculine energy and greatness of Michelangelo. In colour he did not surpass the glowing mellowness and the

freshness of the Venetians. But the adaptability with which he took up and carried through all classes of work, pictorial and ornamental, reflects upon his inexhaustible energy and invention. The measure of the man is given by the delightful "Vision of a Knight" in the National Gallery painted by Raphael at the age of sixteen.

#### LATER FLORENTINE SCHOOL

That sweet fusion of colour with light and shade which Leonardo da Vinci had practised became the ideal of his followers. The Venetian colour schemes, glowing in golden or silvery tones, were likewise influential in discrediting the traditions of the thinner and tint-like colouring of Florentine painting, which in its later period produced three great men—Fra Bartolommeo (1475-1517), his pupil, Andrea del Sarto (1486-1531), and Michelangelo (1475-1564). Fra Bartolommeo and Raphael influenced each other. The monk was a designer "in the grand style," but given to over-statement of shadow by too zealously following the principles of Leonardo. Del Sarto looked not only to Leonardo but to Michelangelo, and produced works of skilful design and luminous colour. His Virgins are of a noble yet gentle type, with no trace of asceticism.

The great Michelangelo Buonarrotti was the crowning glory of the Florentine school as of Italian Art comprehensively. He was architect, sculptor, painter, and poet. St. Peter's, Rome, is partly due to his genius. In his day Rome had already yielded up many a classic masterpiece hidden in its soil. The increasing study of Ancient Greek and Roman authors was turning attention to the grandeurs of the past. Michelangelo carved a cupid and buried it in the earth; it was exhumed and acclaimed a veritable antique. There is no need here to add more to what has already been said of his sculpture. As a painter he still confined himself to mankind for subject-matter. Nothing else stirred him. The painting of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, commissioned by Pope Julius II., is conceived as painted architecture and statuary, with pictures in panels.

The grand style culminated with Michelangelo. He had countless imitators. So great was his influence and so over-

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whelming his genius that Art suffered rather than benefited by the weight of the legacy he left it. No one could equal him, though everyone tried. Instead of a development on normal lines, a fashion of plagiarism set in. The combination of great style and humanism which culminated in Leonardo, Raphael, and Michelangelo was known as "The Grand Gusto" (supreme taste). Anything that did not aim at this was thought negligible. Thus the real and personal taste of succeeding painters was discredited, and Art sank to pompous affectation or to sentimentality for a couple of centuries.

### THE BAROQUE

But new circumstances offer continual occasion to Art, even when artists themselves can find no new formula. The occasion here was the Church. No longer a field for the exuberant love of Nature which had inspired the gothic cathedral builders and image makers, the Church now had its prescribed procedure. It developed the flamboyant, and passed through a stage of extravagant excess, allied to unbridled licence in architecture, and decoration. This was the *Baroque* period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which reached its lowest ebb in the fourth-rate painters of Italy and Spain who, with little technical skill, abandoned themselves to repellent sensationalism. With artistic law and order stultified, a free play of originality resulted in the utmost licence of design. It is to the baroque style (called after the Portuguese term for odd-shaped pearls, "barocco") that we owe the substitution of the curved line in structure for the straight, both in architecture and furniture designing; also the practice of painting objects as though they were coming out of their panelled confines, as when feet, hands, or draperies are painted realistically on the picture frames or architectural mouldings; further, the hysterical and theatrical depicting of religious themes extravagantly designed, such as the very offensive "Agony," by El Greco (1545-1614)—one of these aforesaid fourth-rate painters—recently purchased and placed in the National Gallery. The mixture of hysterical religiosity and sensuous abandon of this period marked the very nadir of art taste and church policy. Continuing in the south through the sixteenth

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century, it gradually gave way before the surviving serener influence of Michelangelo and Raphael.

A painter whose supreme graces have proved baleful by inept imitation is Correggio (1494-1534), who stands alone amongst the "schools," though he is said to be of the school of Parma. His work has the melting shades of Leonardo, and from Michelangelo he caught the skill of foreshortening the figure in all but the most impossible attitudes. His designs are free and grand, with figures floating and flying and seen at all angles. Popular Christian Art has adopted the sweet and soft lineaments of the pictorial type of Virgin invented by Correggio. The winning beauty of his figure-painting in classical subjects assured him a world success, and when, after the Reformation, the Jesuits sought to re-establish the popularity of the Church by attractiveness and blandishment they patronised the Art that Correggio had so exactly developed for those ends.

### THE "DARK" PAINTERS

Ludovico Carracci and his cousins advocated from 1555 onwards a system of eclecticism, seeking to combine the supreme achievements in the work of past masters. Admirable as such a plan seems in theory, in practice it results only in sterility. To copy is death. Life will find its own means and methods. The Eclectics—Domenichino, Reni, Guercino, and others—produced faultless but uninspired work of a sentimental cast. But they were countered by a return to realism on the part of a talented plaster-worker, Caravaggio (1569-1609), who painted in a studio with a concentrated light from a trap door. This meant dark shadows and fierce high lights. The gentler and suaver manner of the Eclectics could not stand against it, and the fashion of depicting saints and martyrs as incarcerated in dungeons quickly succeeded. Its force of effect became a heritage to painting, and in popular opinion, to this day, it forms the distinguishing feature of an "old master."

Salvator Rosa (1615-1673) enjoyed a long and high reputation for romantic landscapes with dramatic episodes; but his star has sunk, and to-day his name is almost negligible.



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### THE SPANISH SCHOOL

The styles of Correggio and Caravaggio were combined in the painter, Zurbarán (1598–1662), whom Philip IV. patronised. But the dark manner, as exemplified in his “Kneeling Dominican,” is still attractive to-day. It was brought into royal favour by the work of Velasquez, the great luminary of the Spanish school. Velasquez was a courtier, and, like Van Eyck, Rubens, and others, acted as ambassador in state affairs. His works are the despair even of modern painters, because of the apparent quiet ease with which, as in the head of Philip IV. in the National Gallery, he attains at one touch of the brush, so to speak, drawing, modelling, and tone. His portraits are human documents, sometimes touching in their pathos, as in the series of Court Dwarfs, in the Museo del Prado, Madrid. His figures seem to stand in real space. This was a great step gained for painting by Velasquez. Before his time environment was “background,” and after his time too. It was not until the nineteenth century that the keen, synthetic vision of Velasquez was appraised at its true value. Then his intense naturalism, freed from triviality of detail, vivified all painting. There was an awakening to the great essentials for which Art had long been feeling and which Velasquez gave simply and serenely. Murillo (1617–1682) followed, but not in the footsteps of Velasquez. He appealed to the sentimental side of the Spanish temperament with his Madonnas in golden glory.

### THE DUTCH SCHOOL

The Art of the Dutch developed on social not religious lines. Its prosperous people, like the prosperous Venetians before them, loved Art for its own sake, and made it for the house not the church. It was truly Art for Art's sake, not even manifesting itself in historical painting, though the annals of the nation boasted of episodes many and creditable enough. Besides having given the first great impetus to Landscape painting, Holland boasts the names of Hals, Rembrandt, and the unerring Van der Helst (1612–1670) in portraiture. Franz Hals is the painter of health, joyousness, and contentedness. His sitters almost invariably smile. “The Portrait of a Man”

shows a gentleman who seems to have just come in from a brisk walk. He is still breathing hard. His hat is off, and shows the mark of its brim upon his forehead. No instantaneous photography, no painter's "impressionism" ever gave the life of the momentary present with more convincing truth and beauty. The touch of Hals is sure and direct, like the touch of Velasquez, though his style is quite unlike that of the stately and rather gloomy Spaniard. But a greater name is that of Rembrandt, the painter of golden, translucent shade. His people seem to sit in places where rich light from an afternoon sun enters at some spot distant from the sitter and is reflected over all the room, filling the very air with gold. His works are well known by reproduction, but the student should study the fine collection in the National Gallery. The beauty which Rembrandt sought was the beauty of phenomena, not that of men's standards in the human form. It is curious that both Hals and Rembrandt should have been allowed to die in poverty in the land of their triumphs.

Everdingen, as already stated, was an early apostle of outdoor Nature. He was succeeded by Ruisdael, one of the first to find in landscape the proper relation of sky to earth. Better known to us here, the brilliant and homely Hobbema is popular by reason of his well-known "Avenue." Van der Neer delighted in light effect—often of moonlight. Cuyp is a painter of unequal merit, attempting a variety of subject-matter; but the golden glow of his later landscapes shares the glories of Claude's. Paul Potter (1625-1654) achieved fame by his rendering of cattle in brilliant sunlight.

Dutch *genre* has already been dealt with. It is a style of painting which is always associated with Holland, and one which, by origin and by the singleness of purpose with which it was superlatively well executed, will always stand to that country's credit and honour.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century the reaction in favour of domestic episodes for pictures began with a rather coarse kind of humorous anecdote. Brouer (1606-1638), the Teniers, father and son (1582-1649 and 1610-1690), and Van Ostade chiefly represent this class. Van Ostade (1610-1685)

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shows an exhaustive thoroughness in the planning of his subjects, and touches his realism with the poetry of suffused light, as in his "Alchymist," or of truthful brilliance as in "The Skittle Players." In a similar manner of research De Hoogh applied himself to daylight effects in rooms and courtyards, which have at all times been admired ; though to the critic his drawing is less sound than that of Vermeer, upon whom he relied for stimulus. Vermeer was one of those exquisite masters of genre that have raised Dutch painting to the highest levels of appraisal. Terborch and Metsu are also leading names in a class of work of which this country possesses a few of the finest examples.

### LATER FLEMISH SCHOOL

The Italian control of Flemish painting lasted as long as the national bent for realism could be suppressed ; but the fun of life at length broke out in unbridled fancy with such painters as the Brueghels, father and five sons, who could scarcely forbear their touches of humour even in Biblical subjects, as the "Adoration of the Kings" in the National Gallery clearly proves.

At the same time the grandiose style of the Baroque still claimed the highest talent, and gained it in the person of Rubens. Sir Peter Paul Rubens employed pupils and assistants and worked indefatigably himself, so that the output was prodigious. He painted portraits of Italian aristocracy during his travels. His landscapes are grand, full, and strikingly observant. His religious and classic pictures unite the fine traditions of Italian design and decorative composition with the ideals imposed by Veronese and Michelangelo. His love of health and life and glowing flesh make a stupendous effect. Brilliant in painting, full of action, rich in the colour of fabrics, armour, skies, and sunny architecture, they have become models of "the grand style." He gave to his best works the charm of Giorgione's mellowness. Rubens married twice, and both his wives inspired his painting. His second young and beautiful wife appears in her glowing nudity in many a mythological subject. Of this "The Judgment of Paris" is an instance.

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Rubens's most distinguished pupil was Van Dyck, who painted much in England in the Court of Charles I. Though dying at an early age, his output was enormous. Courtly and far more restrained in colour and tone than Rubens, though without his masculinity and magnificence, the portraits of Van Dyck have a never-dying charm of thoughtful mastery and elegance. Flemish painting boasts of some fine compositions of figure-work and still-life by Jordaens (1593-1678) and Snyders (1579-1657) respectively.

### LATER VENETIAN SCHOOL

In Italy, Venice alone produced great work after the climax of Michelangelo and Raphael. Titian still lived to inspire Tintoretto and Veronese (1529-1588) with his silvery bloom over rich colour. Tintoretto was a daring designer and fond of arresting effects in light and shade, of a kind that was entirely new to the world of Art. Caravaggio's contrast of dark and light upon objects had become a method and was probably known to Tintoretto. He did not stop there, however. His effects were less realistically prompted. The heavens themselves, lightning, sunshine, the gleam of artificial lights and the radiance of spiritual luminaries furnished him with brilliant effects. Working, as he did, for the Venetian churches and religious houses, he found inspiring themes in miracles and other wondrous episodes, and these gave occasion for his command of draughtsmanship in depicting figures in attitudes impossible to ordinary life. With all his flights of invention there was a most tender pathos. This is particularly seen in "The Murder of the Innocents," in the Scuola di San Rocco, Venice. The originality and inexhaustible inventiveness to which his executive powers were equal, place Tintoretto in the highest rank of all painters.

Veronese, like him, was original, grand in style, and fond of allegory. His works are dignified by elaborate architectural features, and glow with the richness of costume. The canals and lagoons of Venice found loving portrayal by Canaletto and Guardi. The last great name in Venetian painting is Tiepolo (1696-1770). This painter, "the last of the old painters and the first of the moderns," combined the glories

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of the grand style with a dash of gaiety. His designs and his colour inspired Goya (1746-1828) in Spain.

### FRENCH ART

The Art that was first born in France had its parentage in early Flemish masculinity and Italian elegance. It was always thorough and logical, as the excellent portraits at Trafalgar Square of French Kings, painted by the Clouets in the sixteenth century, amply prove.

Under Louis XIV. Art was encouraged, but cannot be said to have produced many great masters. One of the most famous was the painter Poussin (1594-1665), whose classic Bacchanals one passes without any sort of thrill. But his friend Claude Lorrain was a master indeed. His Italian landscapes may be idyllic, theatrical even, but they force one into day-dreams of peaceful joy. When Louis XIV. died, the imposition of official formality passed from Art, as from everything else in France, and painting expressed a freer outlook. Watteau (1684-1721) looked on life as an aristocratic picnic, all feasting, music, and love-making—the idylls of the Venetian Fêtes Champêtres in a lighter mood. Watteau was a delicate colourist, and his works have an aroma of distinction and charm rarely caught by those who carried on his style. The best of these followers was the ill-fated Fragonard (1732-1806) with his sprightliness that cannot conceal a certain tender humanity. Another painter of this period was Greuze (1725-1805), whose heads of young girls adorn our chocolate boxes to this day.

### THE ROCOCO

During the reign of Louis XV. the style of ornament known as the *Rococo* came to the zenith of its popularity. In the hands of the best artists it gave opportunities for graceful fancies in line when employed as a complement to the rigid lines of construction in architecture and furniture. When it was allowed to supplant the right line and assume structural significance it became wrong in principle. This misapplication brought it into indiscriminate disrepute. The name "*Rococo*" is derived from the broken forms of rocks and shells (*rocaille*,

*coquille*) upon which the ornament is based. The style is to be recognised most easily in the furniture of the reign of Louis XV., when its licence permeated pictorial design.

But the tender and often sentimental tendencies of French Art of this period received a sharp check from a strong revival of classic taste. The discovery of Pompeii, the writings of Winckelmann, and the etchings of Roman remains by Piranesi caused a great reaction in favour of everything Greek and Roman. David (1748-1825) carried everything before him with his scenes from antiquity and portraits of ladies in classic draperies.

### ART IN ENGLAND

In English painting there was no strain of frivolity to be reacted upon: up to this time it had always been sober. After the days of Van Dyck, its great set-back was Puritanism, which, however, limited it in quantity rather than in kind. William Dobson (1610-1646) was an excellent portraitist of these days. Charles II. encouraged Sir Peter Lely (1618-1680), whose Court beauties may be seen in the National Portrait Gallery. His painting was easy and a little flamboyant. Kneller, who followed him, lacked his suavity and freedom of style. But neither Lely nor Kneller were Englishmen. Sir James Thornhill, whose paintings are still in the Dome of St. Paul's, was unoriginal though capable, and was the master of Hogarth (1697-1764), who towers as a landmark in English painting, and whose work has already been discussed.

About the middle of the eighteenth century English Art was paramount in portraiture. It is a worthy list: Reynolds, Gainsborough, Ramsay, Hoppner, Romney, Raeburn, Opie, and Lawrence. Of these Reynolds is the giant, but Gainsborough the prince. His ‘‘Blue Boy’’ was a demonstration that a warm-toned picture could be painted in tints of blue. Virility and a well-bred grace, touched with a tender domesticity, distinguish this period of English portraiture, which in its way has never been surpassed.

As in portraiture, so in landscape, English Art has always been itself. That of other nations, America included, owes allegiance to France. Gainsborough won fortune by por-

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traiture, but his heart was in landscape. The romantic shade of a wooded countryside with its quiet peasant episodes delighted him, and he idealised it. Morland revelled in the scenes of the farm and stable and the well-to-do peasantry. But the feeling for pure landscape was caught from the Dutch. John Crome ("Old Crome") was an obscure painter of Norwich, who in giving drawing lessons in great houses saw the works of Hobbema and others which fired his genius. In 1803 he founded a townsmen's school of art with his friends Cotman, young Crome, Stark, and Vincent. The works of this Norwich school are the beginnings of great landscape; for although form and local colour were still the chief impulse, the highly sophisticated composition of the Italian or "grand style" had no influence upon these men. They selected from what was before them, and by allowing Nature to do her own composing, cut landscape away from tradition.

Yet one factor was wanting to the completeness of pure landscape. This was the poetry of Nature's colour, and Turner supplied it. His keen observation infused the hues of the rainbow into that romantic feeling in composition which had culminated in Claude. Constable, born a year after Turner, added the truthful observation of certain effects that the painters of landscape romance had passed over. He composed neither like Gainsborough nor Turner, but in the spirit of Crome. His pictures were not golden dreams, but views of solid earthly Nature, and his achievement was to exalt the commonplaces of Nature to the rank of beauties.

At the latter part of the eighteenth century water-colour began to develop into a permanent method with a school of painters, of whom the chief were Cozens, Girtin, Prout, Cox, De Wint, Cotman, and of course Turner. In the hands of these men outdoor studies secured to landscape an airiness and lightness, a freedom and directness, which stamped it with truth and a peculiar charm of freshness. A genius who died at the age of twenty-seven, Richard Bonington, worked mostly in Paris, and was the means of infusing into the French that new British spirit which led to the next great epoch of landscape painting.

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### FRENCH LANDSCAPE

Bonington exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1822-1824, together with Constable, Varley, and other Englishmen, with the result that an immediate change came over French Art. It turned to Nature pure and simple. Constable received many honours in Paris that his native land denied him. The Forest of Fontainebleau became the seat of inspiration for a school of painters whose awakening had been due to English unaffected simplicity of purpose. Rousseau, Corot, Diaz, and others, settled down at Barbizon, a village in the forest, which gave its name as that of a school to this faithful painting of Nature's moods. The works of Corot are widely known. He was the only painter of the group who made idylls of his landscapes by introducing nymphs, bathers and similar figures. They add a valuable significance to the moods which he expressed through colour and tone. He is the antithesis of Rousseau, with whom form and drawing were the main concern. Dupré, Daubigny, Harpignies, are names of others of this movement for the painting of Nature's moods; to which Millet added the pathos of peasant life. Millet himself was of the soil, and always poor; but he had the true "education," and found inspiration in Virgil's "Georgics" which he read in the Latin.

The most valuable influences of the Barbizon school still animate landscape painting. No new vision that is not reactionary and retrograde has yet been revealed, although further developments have wrought a change in the methods of many.

### THE IMPRESSIONISTS

The Frenchmen Courbet and Manet were pioneers in a new direction. They broke from the smoothness and anecdotic interest of Delaroche and others who had in turn opposed the classic subjects of David by a mediæval romanticism. Courbet, a powerful painter, sought subjects in the lower life of his day and worked much by the methods of Caravaggio and Velasquez. He was seconded by Manet, who studied to be intensely realistic with subjects from high life. Manet's new view of light and colour induced a new method of handling



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paint. Like Courbet, he renounced the beautiful to paint what he thought was alone the true. Manet painted mostly in the open air, chiefly establishing new truths as to tone-values. He was seconded by Monet, who also painted in the open and relied upon colour representation to do all that light and shade required. He exhibited a sunset which he called an impression. All Paris thereupon called the works of this school "impressions," and "Impressionism," after having been a term of banter, became a word revered.

Impressionism was a reaction against symbolism and idealism in Art. It aimed at giving the momentary aspects of light, colour, and movement, such as was impossible in a long and laboured painting. An open-air school—the *pleinairistes*—grew and flourished with Monet's followers, Pissarro, Sisley, and others. Its influence was highly beneficial to Art, although its examples were not always admirable.

### THE PRE-RAPHAELITES

A similar revolt from conventional picture-making, and particularly of conventional shadows which degraded colour, came about in England. In 1848 a group of seven designated themselves the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. They were Rossetti, Millais, Holman Hunt, Woolner, a sculptor, Collinson, and the critics F. G. Stephens and W. M. Rossetti, Dante Gabriel Rossetti's brother. They held that there was only one righteous way to paint, and that was in the manner practised before Raphael had been seduced by classic idealism and studio convention. They would go to Nature. They did. They painted nothing but what was before their eyes; they affected to despise composition (though they simply composed in another way), and they used colour in all the purity of its shop brilliance. There was much that was fine in these practical aspirations, and although their works were raw and awkward, the painstaking effort with which they represented every jot and tittle won them the championship of Ruskin. Millais, of them all, seems to have had genius sufficiently robust and personal to work in the spirit of the fad without letting its material weight obsess him. Before such works as "Ophelia" we do not think of Pre-Raphaelite principles, only of the truth

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of everything. Similarly, in "The Blind Girl" we are amazed at the fulness of response to landscape phenomena—the rainbow in particular—and the rapt face of the girl who enjoys it all by other senses than sight. From no other member of the group do we get this true ring in sense and sentiment. The others are all more or less touched with the affectation of mediævalism and primitivism, if I may use such a word. Holman Hunt, and Madox Brown, a sort of elder brother in the movement, were the only ones who maintained its methods throughout life and brought maturity of thought to correct its youthful indiscretions. Their works are full of intense feeling. Rossetti rapidly matured into more harmonious colour and finer design in his beautiful but rather sickly fancies. Millais became a portrait painter strong in characterisation.

### MODERN PAINTING

There was but one more innovator of note in English Art, namely, Whistler—the very antithesis of Preraphaelism, inasmuch as he advocated Art for Art's sake. His ideas were derived from Velasquez for portraiture and from the Japanese for his landscapes, in which he was the more successful. His influence has been great. Like the Pre-Raphaelites, he too set his face against the popular picture that told a story; a style which had won British hearts from the days of Hogarth, through those of Wilkie, Maclise, and Frith.

Since this is not a history of painting, it is impossible to say more than that the same alteration of styles and motives progressed in Germany and other countries. France alone has influenced modern English Art, whilst that of America is bound up in Parisian teaching. To-day there are as many styles as artists. The old idea of "schools" has passed, and discipleship is limited to a gathering of suggestions; a mild eclecticism derived from exhibitions. The culmination of dexterity which combines, if it does not indeed surpass, the surface truths of Velasquez and the manipulative ease of Hals, is seen in the work of John Singer Sargent, who died in 1925.

This survey of Art from its beginnings does not claim to be more than a rapid recapitulation arrested at a few of the peaks. My critics cannot outdo me in the conviction that

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it has been feeble and blurred, and that it has missed too much. But its brevity has been inevitable. To what lengths would it have been protracted had it tried to do even scant justice to more of the great ones! Some measure of proportional justice has been attempted by dwelling at certain points upon a typical style or a typical example of the greatest among the great of the past. More than that the limits of this book would have made impossible.

## CHAPTER X

### SOME DEDUCTIONS

WITH a retrospect of all that has been done for more than twenty centuries, and a glance at what is being done to-day, we get a confirmation of the truth that Progress is, after all, but change—and trifling change—that goes no deeper than methods and modes. Wonderful things are discovered in the domain of Science ; but there is nothing new to discover in Art. We may annihilate distance and time, and so arrive at new ways of serving up Art, but so long as it is Art at all, it is the same old Art, whether upon a crumbling wall for centuries or upon a gleaming screen arriving moment by moment from the antipodes. The mind of man it is which changes in its response and reaction to fresh stimuli offered by a Life that is the sport of Science.

Nothing else but the fact of this rapidity in the development of our science-controlled existence can account for the different attitude of mind, not only of the people but of artists themselves, compared with that of the time when painting was young, when changes were rare and came slowly : when life was leisurely, and Art was the equal of War in affairs of state. It is perhaps too much to expect in the twentieth century the hot and eager enthusiasm, the jealously guarded motive, the secrecy of method, and the inspiring faith in future achievement which animated the painters of the early centuries. But there is ground enough to deplore the present derogation of many aspects of painting ; their jaded and perfunctory existence ; the fewness of their inspired and enthusiastic executants, and the multitude of those producing mediocrities which nobody wants.

### EMOTION AND VIRTUOSITY

One of the first questions arising in the reflective mind is that of the artist's motive.

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The old work differs in so many ways from the new that an examination of the differences is beyond possibility here. But one point stands out in a manner that courts discussion. It is the comparison between ancient and modern in the matter of incentive. Do painters paint to succeed in life, like other professional men; or do they paint because they must, as the lark sings? Apart from considerations of daily bread and praise or fame, which do not present any difficulty, can we now endorse the theories advanced in the opening chapter which stated the real motive to spring from a desire in the artist for the sympathy of his fellows? It seems to me that nothing else will account for the fact that the practice of Art has been maintained throughout a life-time—in some cases an extraordinary long lifetime—that meagre recognition and even poverty has not caused the intense apostle of Art to relinquish his apostleship, and that the utmost honour and prosperity could no more do so, because the urge was from within, not from without.

So stated, the motive does not seem equal to its consequences; and yet what but a determination to succeed could sustain mediocrity in its tens of thousands? What but the will to be highly appraised could keep the incompetent trying; deceiving themselves and hoping to deceive others in the belief that their work was worthy? If works of art were seen by no eyes but of those who produced them, no artist could survive the years of struggle and ebbing hope. Nor would self-satisfaction and triumph submit to such conditions. The artist works for others, though he sees and feels for himself. If he were without individual and personal response to the stimuli of natural phenomena there would be no need for him to attempt expression. But having seen and felt, he next expresses. Why? Not to confirm his own responses: that were needless; but to show to others what he has seen and felt, and to make them also see and feel. That is sympathy.

If, then, the true artist seeks and evokes an echo in the sensitiveness of his fellow men, how far is he justified in clothing his messages in language which his fellow men cannot understand, or, if they understand, resent? If his impulse is

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really to communicate, then his language should be lucid and eloquent, if not simple. We do not find that it always is. The first mutterings of Art are simple utterances fit for babes. Classic sculpture was never beyond the comprehension of the meanest citizen: it interpreted Nature, and Nature is behind everything that occupies the mind of man. When mysticism crept into Art much had to be taken on trust. Byzantinism cannot have been a message at all, although it claimed by its conventions and symbols to be nothing else. But the Art of early Italian painting and sculpture was childlike in its sincerity of representation and held its ingenuous clarity of expression till the time of Raphael. After him the language of Art grew corrupt with secondary motives. Painters began to think more of the language than of the message. Virtuosity obscured rather than made lucid the message. It was the conviction of this fact that led those half-dozen youths in London to band themselves together as "Pre-Raphaelites" and to break with modern painting.

By the time that virtuosity is sought and prized for its own sake the emotion it should enfold has become of little importance. That is the shady side of the art-impulse. As soon as a man finds he can do a thing, he delights in the mere doing of it: the object of doing it sinks out of mind. If he eventually does it extremely well he begins metaphorically to flourish his hat and to bow. What true artist ever does find that he can do his work extremely well? The fulness and depth of the message is always too much for his effort, and his skill can never overtake it. Sir George Clausen puts the case distinctly in his "Six Lessons on Painting": "It seems as if, in the artist's mind, the desire to express his subject and the desire to display his skill are conflicting tendencies. When these are in perfect balance, we get the finest work. When the desire for expression is the stronger, we get sincere and beautiful, but imperfect and immature work, as in the case of the Primitives. But when the desire for the display of skill is the stronger, we get cleverness, affectation, and decadence" (p. 119). And Jean François Millet has said, "Decadence set in when people began to believe that Art was the supreme end." That is not only a blasting denunciation of virtuosity and Art for Art's

sake, but a wholesome corrective to the idea that the beauty of Art is a loftier thing to aim for than the beauty of Nature.

Virtuosity is at its height in the amazing adroitness of Rubens, but it never outshines his conceptions in their fecund elaborations. The mastery of painting in the "Chapeau de Poil" ministers to and makes possible the ravishments of colour, of design, and of womanly beauties : it does not surpass them in winning attention. Nor do the brush marks of Velasquez in the "Head of Philip IV." and of Hals in the "Portrait of a Man" make any such usurpation. All such utterances are the perfections of eloquence, by which emotion is given its most faultless interpretation. The form cannot be too fine for the content, since one is the measure of the other.

It is, indeed, a matter of equipoise. The resentment comes when equipoise is lacking : when painting is divorced from emotion and becomes a matter of technical display. Want of balance is the ultimate downfall of art effort. That fact is evident in the past, and quite as much on the side of insufficient skill as of insufficient emotion. We may feel an interest for archaic, early primitive, and elementary works in which the power of expression and understanding is so feeble as to result in comicalities ; but we cannot really admire such works, however great the emotion that the *gaucheries* cover. And, for my part, I do not believe that the enthusiasm shown for archaic and early primitive works is a genuine admiration at all. I think it is due to a deliberate stifling of critical judgment in favour of a zest for the quaint, the unusual, and perhaps the abnormal. I am prepared to say that nobody ever really admired a Madonna by Cimabue, and if one was really carried from his studio in a procession, it was by way of an ecclesiastical "stunt," and not because the people acclaimed it sincerely. They may have done so from expediency, or because superstitiously they credited it with some power.

In our own day the divorcement between emotion and virtuosity is greater than ever it was, especially in those mediums that most display virtuosity. The opportunities that are seized for triumphing over difficulties and the excuses such difficulties furnish for "touch and go" and "cut and thrust"

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methods have reduced water-colour painting in particular to displays of cleverness. The cleverness has reached a high self-imposed standard, but it has, in too many cases, left emotion below. Yet, since water-colour is concerned so largely with landscape it has, in truth, ample scope for feeling. Landscape is the direct and pure link between Nature and the artist, and as the works of a few living water-colourists show, it has an appeal that is sure and strong when real emotion directs the eye and the hand.

The old masters were never anxious to vaunt virtuosity. The brush's signs of mastery can be found in Velasquez, but they have to be looked for. *Ars est celare artem* was a tenet strictly observed. Occasionally, as in the case of Tiepolo, there is no obvious care to hide art by art, but he makes no parade of it. Rubens simply doesn't give it a thought: he paints at white heat and leaves it. Of an opposite kind is the virtuosity of painters like Gerard Dou. One feels that Dou paints in order to astound by his magical smallness and smoothness. His subjects carry no emotional content. His portraits are excellent not because of their minuteness of finish, but because of qualities belonging to portraiture generally. So with Meissonier. "How marvellous!" we say; not "How beautiful!" and, with Alma-Tadema, "What wonderful marble!" With Holbein, however, the emotion is in full measure and we are more conscious of what is painted than of the paint.

My point is that with the development of painting and the increase of general knowledge and education; further, with the opportunities of a public kind that have been in existence half a century for the training of artists, the old masters still remain unsurpassed in the perfect balance of the dual appeal. At the beginning of the century we could draw as well as they, colour more naturally, and use material better in some ways than could those of centuries ago, but we could not produce pictures that will appeal in five hundred years' time as the old masters do to us. The reason is that we think too much of the paint, and too little of the painted.

The present bias in favour of virtuosity would not, of course, be wrong in itself if a high standard of accomplishment were



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insisted upon ; but the fact is that technical accomplishment, high as it reaches with some living painters, was never more at a discount than now. The scrawl, the smear, the incompleteness are consistently acclaimed when executed by people of reputation ; and this fact leads directly to the nurture of a specious bravura among those who have not "arrived." Their performances are derogatory to the whole domain of Art ; for it is a fact that fine painting suffers badly by being in an environment less good than itself ; and so the works of virtuosi who are genuinely accomplished and who can balance their skill with real feeling and emotion, do not impress us as they should in exhibitions where sham virtuosity is rampant.

And here we touch upon another difference between the Art of the past and that of to-day. We have in the last quarter of a century extolled the "rough sketch" above the finished work. Instances abound in the Tate Gallery. It is a state of things that can only be described as subversive, born perhaps of a kind of studio "highbrow" critical snobbism. In this the artists have taken their public along with them. The ordinary educated person to-day never looks at a painting without some tiny far-down notion of connoisseurship. He has a slight feeling that he ought to be able to judge it, even though at the same time he feels he cannot. At the Exhibition of Italian Art in 1930 in London the studies and drawings for pictures seemed to be more popular than the pictures themselves. That was a sign of the times. It meant that the direct and unadulterated records of Nature by skilful masters proved highly engaging and delightful to a public grown used to abstractions and affectations : that it was refreshing to find something really natural which it was *de rigueur* to admire. In days of the old masters nobody saw these wondrous drawings. They were kept concealed by the artist as rough notes, trials, attempts, studies for works that themselves would be jealously guarded until they were complete enough to meet the public gaze. The modern sketch does not pretend to be either a trial or an attempt or a study : it is the final thing. The more it approaches to a "rough-out" the more the dealers ask for it. This is unfortunate for two reasons : first it puts a premium

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on mere roughness, and next it encourages the laity in the quite modern eagerness of seeing "how it's done." There is no real harm in this except that it militates against the effect of the thing when it *is* done. You cannot ruffle your child more than by peeping behind his scenes when he is doing private theatricals. He feels it isn't fair. The child is father of the man.

Art sincerely followed is a discipline, not a trifling pastime in which the miss is as good as the hit. The true artist concentrates and labours. His initial efforts lose value with him directly he has surpassed them, and he values them only while they remain unsurpassed. But surpass them as he may, his most futile attempts will find a market in these days if he has a reputation; and I think that is because any effort that is rough and unfinished gains a halo of cleverness with the larger part of the community who do not discriminate, but who are rather pleased to detect faults and, with an assumed superiority, to forgive them. There is no glamour of such a kind for them in the finished things where little errors are all adjusted, loose ends taken up, and no surprises left. To most people nowadays there is less thrill in this than in the muddle of preparation because they think they are at an advantage in being privileged to peep behind the scenes. How well the cinema drama writers know this, the frequency of "back-stage films" amply proves—dressing rooms, "make-up," anomalous environment. The privilege is almost as old as drama itself, which has always been pestered with stage-swarms; but until recent years the graphic and plastic arts had not pandered to this illegitimate curiosity.

The pretext upon which rough sketches are treasured is the quality of "freshness"—a purely physical and material charm, coming, in some mediums, by accidental ways, unexpected, unsought and quite independent of the artist's control. In other mediums freshness exists in the first attack, before revision and correction have modified the inexactitudes that nobody short of a Rubens could avoid. But an artist cannot express himself in terms of freshness alone, any more than a poet can, whose utterances, however engagingly printed and bound, are a mass of uncorrected misprints. It is exactly this

valuation of material freshness above the spiritual content of a work of art which once more separates modern printing from that of the old masters ; for they strove to get into the final work what the sketch or study, however fresh, had missed. And it will be seen that, as a general rule, works having the finest æsthetic and intellectual content, lack the specious freshness. It is beyond average human power to secure both aspects.

Here again, however, we cannot safely argue as though all sketches or initial trials were necessarily fresh ; for in the fight for a place in the market the spurious is pushed forward among the good and true. When once the tentative and un-matured has gained a status by virtue of certain collateral qualities, it is easy to smuggle through the tentative and un-matured that has no other qualities. Hence the sketch that is pleasing because it is fresh is simulated in thousands that are not ; and we are now accustomed to see, in our public galleries, the scrawl, the smear, and the incomplete treated with all the ceremony and honour that should belong to good draughtsmanship, fine colour, and completeness of idea—the attributes without which no picture could pass the most perfunctorily official jury in Victorian days. Excusable imperfections of the rough sketch have become the merits of the ultimate picture. Finish, in the sense of completion as shown by Van Eyck, or Raphael, or Vermeer, is not expected in these days, but we do expect a sketch, and certainly a picture, to *suggest* the qualities, the subtleties, and the accuracies of which the older works never failed.

We do not ask that a work of art shall leave nothing whatever to the spectator to supply ; for the spectator's chief pleasure in a sketch is to fill in the blanks from his own experience of the thing depicted. He cannot do that, however, without something to start from, such as he gets in a late Turner drawing or painting. That is the kind of finish that gives value to a picture because every touch of it carries a precise meaning, and has a relationship to the whole. Other considerations apart, pictures of this kind wear far better than the completely realised ones because they are inexhaustible. They cannot be painted by young people : it is only the

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artist of long experience both in Nature and Art, of great and ready responses, who can achieve them. The young are always literal—or should be. When they are not it is time to be suspicious. The nebulous, the rough, the chaotic, the badly drawn, is produced by no one but the charlatan.

People, in their hearts, love the Gerard Dou kind of thing, with its smoothness and exhaustiveness. In their more outward sensibilities they accept the rough and ready because they flatter their own vanity by persuading themselves that they can understand the workings of the artistic mind : just as they understand the “make-up” behind the scenes. This is where I find fault with the public. Too many pretend to understand and to like what to them is in reality but sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. And it is precisely this tolerance that has encouraged a tendency to slackness and carelessness. The really accomplished painter’s sketch is neither slack nor careless : it is simply a statement of selected essentials, probably made with intense concentration. He could, if he chose, carry it out to complete realisation, whereas the incompetent could not carry his nebulosities a step further in his lifetime.

## DECORATION AND REALISM

The lack of suggestions in realism that occurs inevitably in incompetent work is met by all sorts of fine-drawn excuses, the most shallow of which is the claim of a decorative intention. This has been prompted by a recent fashion, among those who get a living by writing about Art, of dividing pictures into two distinct classes : the decorative and the naturalistic or realistic or pictorial—any one of these terms serves. This perfectly gratuitous classification has given rise to a general confusion in regard to what really constitutes decoration. As a result of this comparison, it is supposed by many to be an end in itself and not related to any object. But to decorate implies something to be decorated ; that is, ornamented, beautified.

In the minor arts of goldsmithery, jewellery, ironwork, carving, and all decorative activities in three dimensions, as well as ceramic or pottery painting and illumination, the aim is not mainly to represent Nature, though Nature may be

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represented incidentally. The aim is rather to enrich a support, or give significance to a purpose, by presenting symbols in the likeness of objects of animate and inanimate Nature, as well as those things which man's hand creates. These symbols convey the message of the artist, and thus lift the object above the plane of mere utility, or, in the case of independent sculpture, increase the allegorical content.

But with the painted picture we have a different set of conditions. The aim is not to decorate the support—mere panel or canvas—but to present a three-dimensional impression or idea. A decorative picture standing alone is a pure anomaly.

As Art becomes finer in conception and execution it is put to higher and more permanent decorative uses. Buildings are glorified by its service. The churches, palaces, and civic halls are devoted to painting, their fixed and lasting areas being deemed most fit to preserve the works of art, and to display them to the gaze of all. I would urge the point that the great men who painted them were not asked to forego any of their skill or their aspirations towards naturalism on the ground that their work was to be upon a wall or a ceiling. The utmost effort of every painter from early centuries to the nineteenth was to make his creations natural and life-like. Idealistic and decorative as they chose to be, they put realism before everything. The fact that we, in these days, can see how far from realistic they really were does not affect the point, which is that the most unrealistic painting the past can produce is so through the failure of the painter to attain his object. The old painters did not see realistically as we do—that is quite certain—but they thought they did. Their efforts are an amalgam of sound naturalism, if not realism, and the poetical impulse which led them to love fine shapes and fine colour. "Decorative" was a word unknown to them. Their object was to make natural and beautiful pictures, not decorations. Their decoration—like M. Jourdain's prose—was practised unawares.

Students of Ruskin will remember the passages in "The Two Paths" where this matter is discussed. He instances some of the great decorations of the Italians, which were specially designed to eliminate the wall idea, in paragraph 73.

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“There is no existing highest order Art but is decorative,” he says. And in paragraph 75 : “Tintoret has to paint the whole end of the Council Hall at Venice. An orthodox decorator” (Ruskin here means a “decorator” of our day) “would have set himself to make the wall look like a wall—Tintoret thinks it would be rather better, if he can manage it, to make it look a little like Paradise.”

Surely, if every kind of Art is not decorative, it has always missed what pre-eminently it should be. Greek, Pompeian, Roman pictures were wall-paintings. Giotto's frescoes were wall-paintings. The earliest tempera work, though largely done for worship-evoking ends, were not less intended as wall decorations. The large oil paintings of the great Venetians and of Rubens, though both devotional and commemorative, were also intended to beautify the buildings for which they were executed, and were nothing if not pictorial.

After twenty centuries of unquestioned procedure one or two writers at the end of the nineteenth century endeavoured to disrupt painting and to divorce its complementary virtues. Realisation must be one thing and Decoration another ; and this is how the contradistinction was to be maintained : whatever was to be painted on a wall was to be free from any trace of realism ; otherwise the wall, as a wall, would be ruined. A wall was a flat thing : *ergo*, anything painted upon it must likewise look as flat as itself. The forms must be flat, the colour must be flat, there must be no cast shadows. An outline was a recommendation because it discounted any suggestion of the third dimension. Since these conditions existed only in the immature works of archaic and primitive artists who had not learnt to paint properly, it was considered advisable that such works should be taken as models for style. “Decorative” painting therefore became not only flat, but stiff, gawky, pallid, empty, nerveless, and unnatural. This retrogressive *régime* is still in force to-day, and people have actually come to believe that there are two kinds of Art, one naturalistic and plebeian and the other decorative and superior. If all this is right, then, of course, Michelangelo, Raphael, Veronese, Tintoretto and Rubens were all wrong.

The eminent and accomplished Puvis de Chavannes had

decorated public building interiors in Paris with large works executed in a very short scale of tones, in a light key, and with much generalisation of line and mass. They were deservedly admired, and, of course, imitated. A fanatical advocacy resulted in an exaggeration of his methods and led to the formulation of a creed which out-Chavanned Chavannes. The mischief of the new fashion, seething among those who had no grasp of principles, soon appeared in our galleries in the form of a deliberate adoption of every incompetence to be found in immature works of any age. These fashionable things were lifeless, angular, ridiculously drawn, unmodulated, without gradation, modelling, atmosphere, shadows, effect, or any other quality to which fine painting had by slow and creditable effort attained through the ages. The work of the giants among the old masters : of Turner, of the Impressionists, of the great draughtsmen, of those who studied life, action, and colour phenomena—all went for nothing.

One of the chief arguments advanced was that if a wall were to be decorated one should never lose sight of the fact that, picture or not, it was still a wall. It seemed to strike nobody that if the nature of the wall were a point of such moment, why should anything at all be put on it? Tapestries had always been made to *hide* the wall as well as to keep the draught away, and they were often rich and "round" enough. Moreover, much as I have admired the works of Puvis, I never felt them to be pictorial *walls*. Quite otherwise. They are airy fairy-lands with distances realised by every resource of linear and aerial perspective.

As if in malicious revolt from this slavery to archaisms, the decorators of Cinemas have now adopted, in what they call "atmospheric decoration," a style which not only plays the trumpets of Jericho to walls and ceiling too, but spirits away every sign of structure by surrounding an interior with schemes of continuous painting representing with all the realism possible, sky and landscape abounding in distant hills and near trees. Truly Time brings in his revenges.

In "Six Lectures on Painting," Sir George Clausen says : "I should like to touch on the question of the picture as a decoration ; in our times a distinction is made between

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painting which is decorative and painting which is pictorial, which is, I think, an unfortunate distinction, and one which should not exist; for all pictures should decorate the walls or places on which they are placed. That this distinction should exist is perhaps our own fault, in forgetting, as we sometimes do, that a picture should be agreeable to the eye in its colours and masses; the good old painters never forgot that" (p. 19).

Sir George, in his gentleness, takes, as painter, the blame upon the fraternity of painters. True it is, that the utmost confusion prevails amongst painters, as well as those who are not, as to what should or should not constitute Decorative Art. The confusion has been brought about solely by critics who have made "watertight compartments" for a division of what had never before been divided.

The mischief does not end here, however. It has permeated to all varieties of painting; its effects have proved irresistible in water-colour landscape in which the Art of to-day places what is held to be decorativeness above naturalism. Its frequent practice is to use flat tints. But the good artist with keen colour-sense takes more delight in modulation than in flatness. He sees, even in grey passages, numberless inner hues, and his effects of light upon objects reveal suggestion of prismatic tints by which they gain life and luminosity. Any single colour may thus be given the beauty of iridescence without losing synthetic value.

The water-colourists who point to John Sell Cotman as their exemplar do him an injustice. This accomplished technician worked with directness, using, in his best examples, a full brush of rich pigment. As a result, his washes do not show the small touch technique of David Cox, or even of De Wint. Cotman never deliberately tries to make his wash look like areas of coloured paper stuck on to a drawing, which is the effect achieved by some who think they copy him. His tones are broad, but never empty. They are full of modulation, and though simple and generalised, they look anything but "flat." The finest of Cotman's water-colours do not strike one as embodying a convention; but the modern examples of the flat-wash style seem to embody little else.



## CONVENTIONS

The question of conventions in Art is one difficult to approach and embarrassing to deal with. The term is applied in such multifarious ways that clear thinking is baffled. In the first place, the whole business of pictorial Art is a gigantic convention ; that is to say, it is a system founded on common acceptances. We do not entirely see the world around us as we paint it ; and we certainly cannot paint it as we see it. Even models and sculpture do not give exactly the results of vision ; and when we come to drawing and painting we have to adopt compromises undreamt of in number and severity by those who do not question the matter. To depict three-dimensional things on a two-dimensional surface involves fundamental compromises and subterfuges such as troubled poor old Plato, and they are still with us. Perspective is admittedly an elaborate convention. It assumes that we have but one eye and that we cannot move it. Without that postulate pictures are either impossible or ridiculous. Artists are very clever in giving the comfort of reasonable illusion to their works ; but there are some things in which even Convention fails them. For example, Perspective stumbles and fails when it is required to render curved surfaces at some distance from the centre of vision—the objective of the stationary eye. There does not exist a picture in the whole world which shows, as the eye might see it, the circular capital of a column in perfect coincidence with its square abacus when the column is at a fair distance to the right or left of the picture. It can't be done. Nobody knows how it ought to look for nobody has seen it ; but everybody knows that the sorry attempts to draw it, even the attempts of the most skilful artists who were daring enough to try, are not what the eye would see if it could. If we keep the eye still we cannot get wide angle enough in our vision to see a real column in this position. And when we move our eye we see it, if at all, too dimly and painfully to be able to make a drawing of it. We have to move our head, and that means a new centre of vision and a *change* in the visual appearance of the capital. Photography ? Alas ! Photography is still less like human vision.

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It has a flat plate instead of a spherical retina to cast its pictures upon, and that means distortion, which is too obvious when the angle is wide. Photography will not truckle with the conventions of Perspective. It wants vertical planes that are spherical on a ground plan, and Perspective assumes them to be on straight lines parallel to the picture plane. This means that circles are always true ellipses in Perspective and ovate to any lop-sided degree in Photography. Photography persists that spheres become ovoid when they are anywhere but immediately in front—emitting the axial ray—but Perspective knows better than that, and the eye backs up Perspective. Again Photography insists, quite rightly this time, that vertical and horizontal lines when they are parallel to the picture plane, both “vanish.” Perspective cannot admit a state of things so opposed to convention.

There are plenty of other conventions with regard to colour and tone relationships which would take too long to state comprehensively here.

A technical convention should be a compromise between antagonisms. If it is not that, it is worse than worthless; it is baneful, because it is an agency that is true to neither opposites and so is doubly false. All the Conventions in Art of the past have been inevitable and therefore valuable. Uncivilised man found no difficulty in them. In fact, he himself invented the greatest of all—the Outline—a thing he never saw, but arrived at mentally. It would have been more like vision for him to have represented objects by flat areas than by drawing round their edges; but it did not bother him that what was within his outline was nothing belonging to the object. Conventions are the line of least resistance to uncultivated minds, and only those who bother to think about them arrive at their true valuation.

But all the foregoing points are of a nature that helps rather than hinders the development of Art. They are compromises between the impossible and the desirable, and upon them Art thrives. Most of the protests against conventions in Art that have been theoretically advanced and supported, have crystallised into new conventions that appeal only to minorities and have but a short life. For it is obvious that even good conven-

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tions can only continue in being while they serve some useful purpose. The paramount purpose in representational Art is the demonstration of our responses to the beauties of Nature. Your "reformer" rarely occupies himself with Beauty; his slogan is usually "Truth." But truth is the most disputed factor of all in Art, and those who think they have it at last are victims of self-deception. Beauty, however, is relative and subjective, and most people have found it inextricably embraced with a gentle and winning kind of Falsehood; a Janus sort of person who can look truthful enough from a certain point of view.

As the reader will have gathered, I find much beauty and refreshment in the landscapes of Claude. He suits my temperament and stimulates me at every turn. Yet there are few of the older landscapists who have been more denounced for their conventions.

Let us consider for a moment the Claude Convention. Whether we analyse one picture by Claude or take a comprehensive view of the whole of his work we find in the first place convincing evidence that his method, manner, style, resources, choice, were all the result of his spotless sincerity. He designed thus, drew thus, and coloured thus because by no other ways could he express his responses to Nature and his feeling for Art. Technically, the points of his style are these:

1. The design is planned to result in a simple and beautiful pattern.
2. Trees are managed in a way that expresses the contrast between umbrageousness and lightness of foliage. The free edges of their leaf-clusters are given as *lingeringly*, not impressionistically, seen against a sky. This, from the point of view of beauty, is as good a convention as the smoky edges of trees painted in the manner of Sir Alfred East. Claude's method secures more of the beauty of shape in silhouette. The stems are studiously wrought to present character, strength and grace, and every delight of pattern design. Their tone alternates breadth with intricacies of growth, and flatness with roundness of modelling.
3. The sky is large in area, exquisitely gradated in colour



THE MARRIAGE OF ISAAC AND REBECCA

[KNOWN AS "THE MILL,"]

CLAUDE



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and tone, uncommonly luminous, and usually carried down to the horizon.

4. The distance is marvellously deep, and though lovingly delineated always keeps its place and is faultless in its preservation of vertical planes in correct aerial perspective.

5. The middle distances teem with interest both as to wild Nature and the work of man, the latter always combining the romantic and the picturesque in buildings.

6. The accessory biblical or mythological figures are grouped in a way that assists the lines of composition. These incidents add more than the much desired "human interest"—they add a literary element which in no other style of picture is so welcome and efficient in giving to the landscape a value of remoteness and romance, of something unworldly and ideal.

7. The architecture is always noble and dignified, its lines and masses being used with skill in the structure of the design; whilst shipping supplies endless motives of intricate massing as well as literary interest.

8. Over all is the grand unifying light and spaciousness, the enveloping, permeating ambient luminosity that emphasises the three-dimensional fascination of all pictorial Art.

As to the colour of Claude, I much prefer it to the equally conventional but far less rich and restrained conventions of modern painting which claims to be "decorative" because it is unmodulated, piercing, gaudy, and aggressive. This is in obedience to a convention (it is not one man's work, but very many) which borrows from the earlier conventions of the primitives with unfairness to them in the act.

If there must be an eclectic good way of painting pictures, where can any holes be picked in Claude's way? Wilson bowed to it, and if he developed further on some of its lines, they were still the lines of Claude's "convention." Turner, too, deferred to it, taking up the development where Wilson stopped.

Our little schoolboys of to-day, in affecting to scoff at Claude, give us slimy wavy lines for mountains; no colour but discordant greens and purples; no drawing, no gradation, no shadows, and such a mix-up of planes that we cannot tell

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which is the near and which the far. They do this in the consciousness of their superiority to a "convention."

It is ridiculous to argue as though the ancient and the modern were respective equivalents of the hopeless and the hopeful. There is necessarily a kind of rivalry between the old and the new, in which development is fascinating by reason of its fresh beauty surprises. But the restful simplicity of statement that resulted from masses of tone, here glowing and there cool, of the old Italians is impossible to-day in similar subject-matter. We could not paint, for example, the out-of-door episodes, in which Veronese united architecture and landscape with groups of imposing figures, and give them his simple grandeur, without falsifying what we should know to be truth of effect. Our out-of-door subjects are flooded with light, direct and reflected. The grandeur of cut-out contours, dark against light, is not everywhere waiting to be painted; it must be schemed for; and when a modern painter does successfully bring it about by the naturalistic use of shade that is real shade, and not mere arbitrary lowness of tone, then he may be satisfied that he has done excellently.

The task before the present-day painter is to beat the old masters on their own ground, if he can; not to attempt to discredit them by inventing new and abnormal ways of seeing and painting for novelty's sake. An insatiable thirst for something fresh argues no mental strength. Rather it proves how little the novelty-monger knows of what has already been done in the world—where there is nothing new under the sun. The public, on their part, should take pride and pleasure in becoming acquainted with the past; for they will not otherwise be able to distinguish wheat from chaff. It is that ubiquitous confession, "I know nothing about Art," which is at once the sign and the nurture of apathy.

### DILETTANTISM AND APATHY

The ground covered in these pages has been extensive; but for that there is a reason. Whilst it is not to be expected that any enthusiast is likely to project his studies into the departments of Greek Vases, Greek Coins, Architecture, Etching, and so on, in addition to Painting and Sculpture, yet there is

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always something to be said for general knowledge and widespread sympathies. It is customary to assert that no one can do any good in any subject without specialisation. For earning a livelihood, that is in these days most unfortunately true; but for welfare in general there could not be a worse policy. The specialist's concentration entails the condition that he should proceed in a groove, over the walls of which his vision cannot rise; but the man who has an all-round vision is in the advantageous position of seeing the relationships between things widely different, and that is the quintessence of wisdom. In Art matters, underlying principles are everything: surface variations are of much less moment.

For the study of pure design, vases form as good object lessons as do coins, and both are as good for this purpose as pictures. In pictures the principles of design are rooted together with those of statuary. Coins are but statuary in low relief on a small scale, and so are engraved gems. Landscape and figure work are equally matter for all graphic Art; and he who specialises in one particular epoch of painting exclusively, misses much that would be of value to him in engraving and etching. Would he ignore, for example, the plates of the *Liber Veritatis* and the *Liber Studiorum*?

To take something of a connoisseur's interest in all kinds of artistic expression is, after all, only to specialise nearer the roots of things instead of in one variation at the surface. Moreover, to interest oneself in everything that comes along is profitable for specialisation, since collateral knowledge supplies valuable side-lights.

We are not Dilettanti enough in these days. Dilettantism is an excellent preparatory school for a liberal education from which to step into any special department.

But there is another advantage in Dilettantism lacking in these days. It is the wide spreading of a beauty love. In the generous days when everything had not to go down before the needs of Commerce, Beauty had a holding in all concerns, whether they were artistic, scientific, or social. One has only to look at antique scientific instruments—astrolabes and things of that kind—to see how *unnecessarily* beautiful they were. Allusion has already been made to the similarly unnecessary



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embellishment of old maps. There are still enough old buildings extant to bear witness to the universal love of Beauty for its own sake in architectural activities. Fine Art is in its very essence unnecessary, as we tried to prove in an opening chapter. Commercial economy, which is a virus of new growth, will have none of it. Recent generations have lost the appreciation for Fine Art Beauty that our grandfathers had; for their culture was a dilettante affair. Ours is specialised; so that if we do indulge, it is in some particularised direction—china, silver, etchings—whilst in all other varieties of Art effort we are content to remain indifferent. We are, in fact, tainted with the collector's tang of the auction room.

I would plead for some return to the open and free response to the beautiful wherever it may lurk; and chiefly I would urge that the auction room and its valuations be given a rest. Let us look at our old masters for the beauty that they have for us: not as investments, as our collectors regard them; not as curiosities, in the way that our modernist artists regard them; not as effete and obsolete lumber as our gallery curators regard them, when they take them from their accustomed places to hide them away in cellars in order to make room for modern futilities that nobody takes seriously. Recently I went into the Luxembourg Gallery to see one or two old favourites, for a special reason. They were no longer there. Room after room was filled with appalling rubbish. A few amazed visitors paced slowly through without a thought of stopping before anything, and then filed out in resentful silence. The Louvre is filled with national assets—so that is officially safe. Would that our own officials' hands were similarly tied! We should miss fewer of the things we admire.

The retort to this kind of lamentation is that modern Art must be displayed. Must it? Even when it includes the "modernistic"? No one would question the propriety of a gallery encouraging modern Art that was worth encouraging, so long as the great dead were exclusively honoured in their Trafalgar Square Valhalla; but who wants the modernistic output, either to look at in a gallery or to buy? And does it

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not get full enough recognition by the Royal Academy and the dealers? Why should our public galleries allow the inimitable treasures to sink out of the sight of man, whilst harbouring the abortive renouncements of those who cannot emulate the best?

It is often advanced that the public is capable only of taking delight in the trivial, the meticulous, the small, and the obvious, and that therefore the artist who pleases the public necessarily does so by himself descending to these negligible and low-grade qualities, whilst the superior artist remains above the public level. The argument is entirely fallacious. Superior artists and writers who speak in this way visualise the public as ignorant, narrow, and degraded. They do not see that the public includes all grades of society from the ignorant labourer to the cultured aristocrat, and among them all who are expert in the arts and professions. To a painter "the public" can only signify everybody who is not a painter: to a musician, a poet, a lawyer, a divine, everybody who is not respectively of those professions—in short all who are "laymen." This is the public that is in reality "the man in the street"—or in the motor car, for that matter.

The "man in the street," the "layman," the individual, in fact, who forms in the aggregate the millions of sane unbiassed people, must never forget that he is in a vast majority; whilst the groups who organise Art are in a small minority. The layman, therefore, who finds his intellect insulted and his taste scandalised in a gallery, must not jump to the conclusion that he is one by himself. From every point of view that is quite wrong. Pictures are painted for the people, and if the pictures that are painted do not coincide with the views of average educated and cultured people, then such pictures cannot possibly represent a National Art.

If we look for some exposition of the merits of this seditious and subversive kind of painting we find literature enough certainly, but it is of the nature of excuses, apologetic dissertation, exhortation of the inquirer: never that true-ringing, spontaneous and irrepressible acclaim that fine work always evokes, of whatever school or description. Special pleading in a bad cause is as reprehensible as the cause itself: the

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pleader becomes accessory after the fact. Fortunately, it gains but few ears. The public indifference is not all apathy : some of it is innate politeness which, in the English mind, prevents active protest, except in the case of irresponsible students who make occasional demonstrations with tar and feathers, green paint, and other damaging materials. But those outbursts are sure signs of the inner public impulse.

While this undesirable state of things continues we can do nothing but turn our attention more consistently to the masterpieces of the past. Their beauties unfold to anybody who is not biassed. Quiet, solitary, and prolonged examination of works of art is a refreshment ; but there must be no *cicerone* business about it. That I utterly deprecate as distracting, misleading, and resultant of nothing but "arty" priggishness which is the most unendurable trait of all in civilised man. He who would see the beauties of Art must look with his own eyes.

It is evident from what has gone before that the appreciative faculty in Art is a thing that must be nurtured and developed ; and the only way to achieve this is to exercise it to the utmost. One of the earliest advantages of such exercises will be a pleasant consciousness of the budding critical power. Discrimination sets in. Preferences are fearlessly stated. They may be at fault from the mere fact of immaturity in judgment ; but that matters little in view of the fact that the mind is concerning itself with Art principles, and thus acquiring broader outlooks on life.

The commonplaces that satisfied before will become powerless to please. That may be a loss in one sense, but it can safely be regarded as a good riddance. It is the inevitable price one pays throughout life for having preferences. We cannot be content with something we know to be less good than it should be.

Another point must be touched upon. Judgment may outstrip appreciation in enabling us to detect the power and worth of a work of art of which the message is not wholly intelligible to us at once. The treat is in store for us in that case. Were there no discernment of the artist's merit, apart from subject-matter, the work would be lost to us, for we

## SOME DEDUCTIONS

should turn away from it as tiresome stuff upon which it was needless to waste time.

In the same way the power of judgment supports us in resenting the debased forms of Art that succeed when they are not subjected to a test. Popular judgment has not been sound or active enough to oppose the gradual steps of a progress towards the overthrow of true Art principles.

In Art as in life, it is from reason that our judgments rise. We must not allow ourselves to be persuaded that artistic enjoyment is one thing and cool reason another. All enjoyment is but the response to ideas that our experiences recognise. It is some mysterious sense within us which causes us to like or dislike things.

Reynolds, in his profound wisdom, said: "What has pleased and continues to please, is likely to please again; hence are derived the rules of Art, and on this immovable foundation they must ever stand."

Those words are pure philosophy; unassailable. They are the answer to apathetic minds who to-day regard Art as a branch of commerce, judging its works by the power they possess of stimulating the jaded. "From the time when a serious work begins to fail in this respect," wrote a recent contributor to a newspaper, "I regard it as a museum specimen"—meaning by "museum specimen" something preserved for educational purposes only. This utterance is a genuine exposition of the modernist's outlook, which is that pictures should be posters. With a few exceptions, modernistic Art is all posters, advertising railway stations, restaurants, this and that, and worst of all, the artist himself.

I have written the foregoing pages in order to prove, if I can, that it is not the fault of what are misjudged museum specimens, but the fault of the torturous stimulation of modernistic Art that the public mind has become jaded and can respond to nothing but ever-increased torture.

Those of us who are able to recoil from the turmoil of publicity and all its abominations are able to recapture in works old and new those indescribable delights that always have been and always will be the lure of the Fine Arts.

The history of Art is a continuous tale of changes of style:

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changes due to man's progress through the ages. Not only does progress, in its ebb and flow, occasion the succeeding phases of mental outlook on Art, but it brings to hand new material, new appliances, and new methods.

Inevitable as this development must needs have been, there has remained one thing that has never changed in the main, and that is the impulse behind Art-expression—the desire for beauty. The purer this desire, and the more whole-hearted the effort to achieve it, the more surely has the Art-expression appealed and the greater and more lasting has been the response. The ugly, which comes and goes with waves of decadence, only sets in men's hearts a more determined quest for the beautiful, the saving grace of existence.

FINIS

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I.

*See p. 28.*

Extract from Plato's "Republic." Davies & Vaughan's translation. Golden Treasury Series, Macmillan & Co., Ltd.

Book X., p. 346.

Plato is pretending to be Socrates. He is talking with Glaucon.

"Socrates : Objects of the same size, I believe, appear to us to vary in magnitude according to their distance from our eyes.

"Glaucon : They do.

"And things which look bent under water appear straight when taken out of water ; and the same objects look either concave or convex, owing to mistakes of another kind about colours to which the eye is liable ; and clearly there exists in the soul a kind of utter confusion of this sort. And it is just this natural infirmity of ours which is assailed with every species of witchcraft by the art of drawing, as well as by jugglery, and the numerous other inventions of the same sort.

"True.

"And have not the processes of measuring and counting and weighing made their appearance most agreeably to aid us in dispelling these tricks of fancy, and to overthrow within us the power of vague notions of degrees of magnitude, quantity, and weight, and establish the control of the principle, which has calculated, or measured, or weighed ?

"Undoubtedly.

"And surely this must be the work of the rational element in the soul.

"Yes, certainly it must.

"But when this element, after frequent measuring, informs us that one thing is greater or less than, or equal to, another thing, it is contradicted at the same moment by the appearance which the same things present.

"Yes.

"Did we not assert the impossibility of entertaining, at the same time, and with the same part of us, contradictory opinions with reference to the same things ?

"Yes, and we were right in asserting it.

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"Then that part of the soul, whose opinion runs counter to the measurements, cannot be identical with that part which agrees with them.

"Certainly not.

"But surely that part which relies on measurement and calculation must be the best part of the soul.

"Doubtless it must.

"Hence, that which contradicts this part must be one of the inferior elements of our nature.

"Necessarily so.

"This was the point which I wished to settle between us, when I said that painting, or to speak generally, the whole art of imitation, is busy about a work which is far removed from truth; and that it associates, moreover, with that part of us which is far removed from wisdom, and is its mistress and friend for no wholesome or true purpose.

"Unquestionably.

"Thus the art of imitation is the worthless mistress of a worthless friend, and the parent of a worthless progeny.

"So it seems."

Etc.

## APPENDIX II.

*See p. 196.*

Plutarch—"Pericles."

"Phidias the sculptor accepted the contract for the statue; and being a friend of Pericles, with considerable influence over him, he became an object of jealousy and acquired many enemies, while the democratic party made his case a test of the probable disposition of the jurors towards Pericles. They suborned one Menon, an assistant of Phidias, and caused him to sit as a suppliant in the market-place and demand assurance of pardon, in order that he might accuse Phidias or give evidence against him. The people listened to the man's charges, and there was a trial in the assembly; but the charge of theft was not proved; for Phidias had by Pericles's advice originally fitted the gold to the statue, and fastened it upon it in such a manner that it was quite possible to take it off and determine its weight, which Pericles ordered the accusers to do. But the fame of his works caused Phidias to be the victim of jealousy, notably because, in representing the battle of the Amazons on the shield, he had introduced a figure of himself as a bald old man lifting up a stone in both hands, and a very fine portrait of Pericles fighting with an Amazon. The attitude of the arm, however, which is levelling a spear across the face of Pericles, is ingeniously contrived with the intention, as it were, of concealing

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the likeness of which a glimpse is shown on either side. Phidias then was cast into prison, where he fell sick and died, or, as some say, was poisoned by his enemies, in order to bring discredit upon Pericles."

### APPENDIX III.

*See p. 207.*

Pliny—"Natural History." XXXVI.

" . . . The Venus, to see which many have sailed to Cnidus, is the finest statue not only by Praxiteles, but in the whole world. He had made and was offering for sale two figures, one whose form was draped, and which was therefore preferred by the people of Cos (to whom the choice of either figure was offered at the same price) as the more chaste and severe; while the other which they rejected was bought by the Cnidians and became immeasurably more celebrated. King Nicomedes wished to buy it from the Cnidians, and offered to discharge the whole debt of the city, which was enormous; but they preferred to undergo the worst, and justly so, for by that statue Praxiteles made Cnidus famous. The shrine which contains it is quite open, so that the image, made, it is believed, under the direct inspiration of the goddess, can be seen from all sides, and from all sides it is equally admired . . ."

### APPENDIX IV.

THE MAGIC SQUARE IN DÜRER'S "MELENCOLIA."

*See p. 241.*

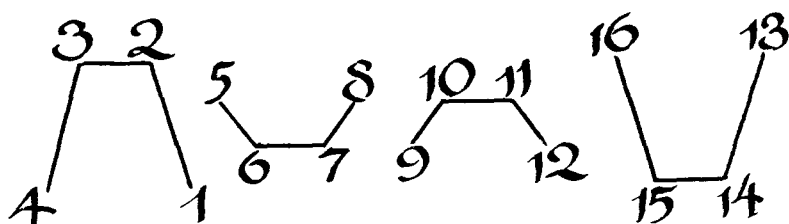
Dürer's mother died on May 17th, 1514. The figures on the square can be read as follows: The two figures in the opposite corners to each other,  $16 + 1$  and  $13 + 4$ , total to the day of the month. The centre figures, crosswise, do the same,  $10 + 7$  and  $11 + 6$ . Likewise the middle figures at the sides, diagonally,  $9 + 8$  and  $12 + 5$ . The two middle figures in the top line,  $3 + 2$ , give 5, the month of May; and the two middle figures in the bottom line give the year, 1514. This is all remarkable enough,

16	3	2	13
5	10	11	8
9	6	7	12
4	15	14	1



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and seems as though some special coincidence of the fatal date with the unalterable laws of mathematics had been pre-ordained ; especially so when, as I find, the arithmetical order of the numbers proceeds upon a pattern that is quite free from any irregular variation to accommodate so chancy a thing as a date. The numbers from 1 to 16 make points in a series of these patterns :



### APPENDIX V.

#### “STATES” OF ENGRAVINGS.

*See p. 253.*

“ ‘State’ is the term applied to the stages of development of an engraving. The artist constantly takes impressions, or ‘proofs’ to prove his subject before its completion, and even after its completion he may introduce changes at various intervals. Impressions which show any differences in the work of the original block, plate, or stone are said to be in different ‘state.’ ”

“ Some cataloguers reserve the term ‘state’ for the differences after the completion of the subject, using ‘proof’ (‘engraver’s proof’ or ‘progress proof’) for the stages of the plate before completion, from which only a few impressions would be taken ; but as in the majority of cases it is impossible to be certain at what precise point a print may be said to be complete, the only plan which can be carried out logically is to use the word ‘state’ (I., II., III., etc.) for all changes from the inception of the work, keeping ‘progress proof’ or other term, wherever applicable, as a descriptive addition. If a print is in its tenth state (or what not), it is not thereby a bad impression so long as only a few impressions from its earlier states have been printed. And it is equally possible for an early state to be a bad impression if a large number of prints have been taken before any change has been made on the plate. ”

“ Differences of lettering on the plate (in fact, any marks on the plate except the fortuitous scratches which naturally appear with the wearing of the copper), as well as work on the subject

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itself, are of course taken as marks of state. Such artificial distinctions as those of *remarque* proofs, which had a certain vogue in the nineteenth century, are rather to be regretted. The engraver adds a little sketch or token (the *remarque*) in the margin merely as a sign of state."—" *A Guide to the Processes and Schools of Engraving*," *Brit. Mus.*, 1921.

Perhaps it might be added that the well-known phrase "proof before letters" has reference to the inscription beneath the subject. When plates, particularly in France, were dedicated to a patron, there usually appeared his coat of arms, the *fleuron* on the bottom margin of the plate. In such a case, a first state might signify one, at least, of the stages at which proofs were taken before the *fleuron* was engraved. And a third state might indicate a proof taken after the *fleuron*, together with the title and dedication, had been added. There might even be a fourth where the painter's name of the original was inserted at the left bottom corner and that of the engraver at the right-hand corner. In French engraving a further state exists also in the appearance of the words "Avec privilège du Roi," or the mere initials A.P.D.R. When the bulk of prints came to be taken this last addition was removed; so that an impression showing everything except A.P.D.R. would certainly not be anything but a "print."

## BOOKS RECOMMENDED

Clausen, Sir George. "Royal Academy Lectures." (Methuen.)

Speed, Harold. "Science and Practice of Oil Painting." (Chapman & Hall.)

Reynolds, Sir Joshua. "Discourses."

These three books on painting are written by painters. That fact is an assurance of authoritative inner knowledge of their subjects and of directness in reasoning and statement. The lectures of Sir George Clausen are the simplest, most modest, truest, and most wise pronouncements upon painting that I know. Mr. Speed's book is fearless and sound. Of Sir Joshua's "Discourses" there is no need to add a word to their fabric of fame.

Della Seta, Alessandro. "Religion and Art." (Unwin.)

Reinach, Prof. Salomon. "Apollo." (Heinemann.)

Mention must be made, in acknowledgment, of the author's indebtedness to A. Della Seta's extraordinarily valuable contribution to theories on a specific line of Art; his work is a mine of learning and deduction: likewise to Prof. Reinach's lectures published under the title of "Apollo"—a marvel of conciseness, of which the first half is unsurpassed for just valuations.

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